ECONOMIC HISTORY OF ANCIENT INDIA

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RADHAKRISHNA CHOUDHARY

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Dedicated to the sacred memory
of
all the Pioneers in the field

PREFACE

I must state at the very outset that the work is meant neither for the specialists nor for the experts. It is a modest attempt to set forth a brief sketch of economic history of ancient India in outline. With objective restrictions and subjective limitations, the work simply attempts to sum up the given knowledge for those who are interested in early Indian economic history. All aspects economic history are not found in a single volume and this study fills up that gap. I do not claim any perfection and am always open to correction. Since a detailed record of early Indian economic activities is lacking, one can not avoid generalisation on certain issues. In analysing my points, I have tapped all possible sources and have studied various aspects in a new perspective. The lot of common man was as hard as is today and the peasants and workers suffered from the evils of indebtedness and penury. I have tried to look at all those problems squarely in their faces. Methodology and canonical attitude have also been studied. In my own way I have attempted a systematic study of the early Indian economic life on scientific lines. I have discussed all the important issues connected with the economic history of ancient India in a general manner A general survey of the economic life has been given. The growth of guild town life, and internal and external trade, opening of internal and external trade routes, issues connected with the state interference in economic life at various stages have been critically dealt with. Hitherto no work on economic history has dealt with feaudalism Teigle economy and status of a common man. These three topics have been discussed in the light of original sources. An exhaustive bibliogy apply at the end has been added for the benefit of the readers.

I am fully conscious of my limitations and imperfections and crave the indulgence of my readers and very humbery note the feeling expressed by Hemachandra "May the noble minded scholars kindly correct whatever errors may have been committed here in the way of wrong interpretation and misstatement" (Hemachandra).

I am very much thankful to Shri Nand kishore Singh of Messers. Janaki Prakashan, Patna : Delhi at whose request the book has been written and the care with which they have published it. Without their initiative it would not have been published so early.

University Department of History Bhagalpur University, 1st September. 1982	**RADHAKRISHNA CHAUDHARY**

ABBREVIATIONS

1. AS — Arthashastra
2. ARE — Annual Report of Epigraphy
3. AI — Ancient India
4. ABORI — Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute
5. BK — Book
6. BSOAS — Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies
7. BORI — Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute
8. CII — Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum
9. CHI — Cambridge History of India
10. DHNI — Dynastic History of Northern India
11. EI — Epigraphia Indica
12. IC — Indian Culture
13. IA — Indian Antiquery
14. IHQ — Indian Historical Quarterly
15. IS-PP — Indian Studies — Past and Present
16. JB(O)RS — Journal of the Bihar (and Orissa) Research Society
17. JAOS — Journal of the American Oriental Society
18. JOR — Journal of the Oriental Research
19. JOI — Journal of the Oriental Institute
20. JAIH — Journal of the Ancient Indian History
21. JUPHS — Journal of the U. P. Historical Society
22. JIH — Journal of the Indian History
23. JNSI — Journal of the Numismatic Society of India
24. JBBRAS — Journal of the Bombay branch of the Royal Asiatic Society

25. JRAS — Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society
26 JASB — Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal
27. JESHO — Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient
28. MBH — Mahabharat
29. MPE — Minor Pillar Edict
30. NBP — Northern Black Polished ware
31. PIHC — Proceedings of the Indian History Congress
32. PGW — Painted Grey Ware
33. PUJ — Patna University Journal
34. Periplus — Periplus of the Erythraean Sea
35. PE — Pillar Edict
36. RE — Rock Edict
37. RT — Rajatarangini
38. SII — South Indian Inscriptions
39. IESHR — The Indian Economic and Social History Review

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CHAPTER—I

GENERAL INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

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1. Geographical Background :

Geography has marked out the Indian subcontinent as a special unit and has saved her from many vicissitudes in the past. Only India is such a vast country comprising territory both in and out of tropic, continental land and peninsular land, rainfall varying from less than five inches to five hundred inches, hot damp country with vegetation of tropical luxuriance, to country which is bleak desert with a climate of almost North European severity that observation which are true of one region may not be true of another. Diversities in Indian topography are remarkable and climate is equally conductive to the development of physical and mental activities.

Nature through her seas and mountains has decreed the oneness of India. The regions are :

Kashmir;

The Punjab (Saptasindhava) formed by the basis of the Indus and its tributaries;

The vast Gangetic basin (U. P. & Bihar)

The Cis—montane Valley of Brahmaputra including the great delta forming Assam and Bengal;

The Great Indian desert forming Rajasthan;

The upper reaches of the Narmada and the Tapti, forming Malwa and its successor Madhyapradesha;

The lowest reaches of these two rivers along with the beautifully set peninsula, Saurastra or Kathiawad forming Gujrat;

The great table-land of Deccan, formed by the tilling landmass, from the lofty spurs of the Western Ghats to Hyderabad, and thence undulating almost imperceptibly to the East coast; this area was more or less coterminus with Andhra empire of the Third century B. C., the Bahmani Kingdom later and also with the Hyderabad State.

The strip of plain between the Ghats and the Arabian sea called Konkan and the Desh, the home of the valiant Maratha race.

The vast tip of the peninsula, extending southwards from the Krishna and the Tungabhadra, became the centre of Dravidian culture;

The part of the peninsula South of Sahyadariparvata right upto Krishna—Tungabhadra Desh has been called Deccan.

Guarded by the Himalayas on the North and enriched by the rich and mighty waters of the Bay of Bengal (*Purvasamudra*), Arabian Sea (*Paschimasamudra*) and the Indian Ocean on its East, West and South respectively, India has an advantageous situation. Ptolemy extends Western boundary as far as Hindukush and included Afganistan, Baluchistan, and Kandhar within the limits of India. This trans-Himalayan Hindukush pierced by several passess has been successfully used in all ages, *Madhyadesa* (Middle country), *Uttarapatha* (Northern India), *Prachya* (Eastern India), *Dakshinapatha* (Deccan), *Aparanta* (Western India) are some of the typical geographical divisions of ancient India. Malayaparvata, *Mahendraparvata* and Eastern and Western Ghats form part of the great Indian peninsula.

There is a yearning for unity in the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* and in writings of Kalidas whose description of the Indian landscape is marvellous. Kautilya in dealing with gems and other products mentions the area in which they are found. He mentions Tamraparni and also the rivers of Keral. Vatsayana shows familiarity with the geography and political divisions of the country and enumerates the special customs and practices prevalent in different parts of India. Kalidas shows a detailed knowledge of geography and his knowlege of India is that of an expert geographer. To the people of North India, the sea meant very little. The excavations at Arikamedu have clearly proved that the southerners were in close commercial contact with the Mediterranean people. The idea of ruling the seas never entered the monarchs of North India, while it was a normal conception with the Kalingas; the Cholas and the Pandyas. The maritime activities of India's Paninsular civilisation become clear.

The influence of physical factors upon the life of the people is evident. These include the climate and geographical configuration, nature of the soil and its productive capacity etc. There has always been economic unity of a type like the cultural unity of the country. Indian economy was based on agriculture and village community. One of the major reasons for the failure of the major empires in the past was the absence of uniform technological development. India, even in the economic field, has always been in the forefront in her own way and her contact with the countries of the East and the West have always been very intimate through the ages. The geographical features of this vast subcontinent have influenced the socio-economic pattern since time immemorial. The economic flora and fauna included rice, wheat, pulse, cotton, hemp. jute, sugarcane, linen, *til*, castor, mustard, *mahua*, cocoanut, pepper, cloves, cardamom, cinnamon. saffron. costus, spikenard, nard, ginger, turmeric, indigo, sandal wood. silk, lac, vegetables and fruits, cattle, fishing and minerals of all kinds and varieties.

Towns flourished on the banks of almost all the important rivers and climate had bearings on the economic life of the people The traders and mariners utilised monsoon winds. The currents of. the South-Western and North-Eastern monsoon were very helpful to them for their inward journeys from the African coast to Western India and outward voyages from Malabar coast to Egypt. The monsoon wind also helped the mariners of India who engaged in trade with Eastern Archipelago. According to Pliny, the existence of these air currents was discovered, so far as the Graceo-Roman world was concerned, by the Greek sailor Hippalus and this contributed to the growth and volume of trade with India. The forests were of great economic value and came to be regarded as state property.

The cities rose not only on the river banks but also on trade and pilgrim routes. Pataliputra occupied a secure position. Sanchi stood at the junction of several routes from upper Ganges Valley to Ujjain and thence to Pratisthan (Paithan) and Deccan in the South and West ward to the Sea. Bharukacha (Broach) was an important city. From the tip of the peninsula at Kanyakumari (Cape Comorin), the Malabar and Coromandel coasts extend fifteen hundred kilometres, the one to the North-West and the other at first Northward, and then to the North-East. There are a few good natural harbours along either coast. Located halfway on the maritime routes form the Mediterranean and Africa to China, Peninsular India developed and maintained a fairly brisk maritime trade with nations on either side for centuries and had a large share in the colonisation of Eastern lands across the Bay of Bengal. The Satvahanas, the Pallavas and the Cholas maintained a strong navy. An early account of the ports of peninsular India and conditions of maritime trade is found in the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* (henceforth abbreviated as the *Periplus*).

According to Megasthenes the number of cities were to great that it can not be stated with precision. Cities like Taxila, Pushakalavati, Bharukacha. Tamluk or Tamrapliti, Kalyan, Sopara, Mangalore and others played an important part in the economic life of the country. Megasthenes has alluded to the great road which is recorded to have connected Pushakalavati on the one hand with Tamralipti on the other (thus linking West with East) by land. Periplus has recorded a connection by road between Masulipattam and Tagara (south to north). Broach, Patliputra and Ujjain were also connected by road and played significcant role in the economic life of the people and influenced the course of economic history. Its commercial importance was recognised by Megasthenes. Rivers served as waterways for commercial intercourse and helped the development of country's material prosperity. Even in the sixth century A. D. the sea proved an important route for commercial traffic. Ceylon was the clearing house of trade between China and Persia. There were a large number of ports in India. We learn from *Milindapanha* that a ship owner became wealthy by constantly levying freights in some seaport towns and would be able to traverse the high seas and go to Sauvir and Alexandaria where ships abounded. According to *Milindapanha* voyages were made from Alexandaria to Cholapattanam and upto even Suvarna-bhumi. Sialkot had become a great commercial centre during the time of Menander. Zenob Glax (3rd-4th century A. D.) has recorded that there was an Indian colony in Armenia in the First Century A.D.

Thus a critical study of the geographical background and its relation to its economics condition reveals the importance of such an approach to country like India, surrounded on three sides by sea and one side by mountain. The charge of insularity does not stand. India's relation with countries outside her geographical limits were always intimate and cordial and the contacts proved helpful both materially and culturally. Kennedy has rightly pointed out that the earliest trade of the world was between the earliest centres of civilisation. Sea voyages from Benares to Babylon through the Ganges and via Broach and sailing, through the Persian gulf, must have been made in Indian vessels. We learn from the *Kevattasutta* of the *Dighnikaya* that such voyages by the Indians over the high seas must have started much earlier. They took with them a shore-sighting bird. The geopolitical factors influenced Indian economic history to a great extent.

2. Sources of Study :

The various sources, taken together, open up new vistas and reveal interesting institutions and practices at work. These sources conjure up an advanced materialistic consciousness. The sacred institutes and canonical literature represent only the Brahmanical scheme. Buddhist practices exhibit some advance over the Brahmanical ones towards equality and democracy in their monastic organisation. Barring the *Arthashastra* and the *Periplus*, none of our earlier books are written from the economic point of view. The *Arthashastra* is, of course, the most precious. The *Puranas*, *Panchatantra*, *Hitopadesa*, *Epics*, *Kathasaritasagar* and literary sources afford glimpses into raw human life.

The *Vedas, Epics*, *Smritis* and *Arthashatra* have advocated secularism to an extent and all these texts including the *Puranas* and legal literature are some of the sources for the study of economic history. These reflect the prevailing social and economic ideas. The *Arthashastra,* though compiled later, reflects the state of economy and society in the age of the Mauryas. We have a large body of secular literature such as the law books called *Dharmasutras* and *Smritis* which together with their commentaries are called *Dharmashastras*. The *Dharmasutras* (compiled between 500 and 200 B. C.) and the principal *Smritis* (codified in the first sixth centuries of the Christian era) lay down rules according to which property is to be held, sold or inherited. Apastamba, Baudhayana Gautama, Vasistha, Manu, Yajnavalkya, Visnu and others throw considerable light on the subject. The legislative measures reflect the stage of social and economic development and also the social and economic thought which determine the pattern of social relation ship.

Kautilya's reference to tenants working on half of the produce of soil find close similarity with the evidence found in Manu, Yajnavalkya and Pallava records. Other trade dues such as *Sulka, Pranaya. Gulmadeya* bear close correspondece with *Avadanasataka, Divyavadana*, and the Junagadh inscription of Rudradaman. The *Buddhacharita, Saudaranandakavya. Avadanasataka, Divvavadana. Lalitavistara, Visnusmriti*, didactic portions of the *Mahabharata*, dramas of Bhasa, and the epigraphic records of the Ikshvakus and the Pallavas throw new light on different aspects of economic history. A variety of interpretation is possible on these sources as many of them are not primarily historical works. These sources are to be treated with caution and critical eye. We have to sift legends from facts and adjust date accordingly.

The *Rigveda* throws an interesting sidelight on some aspects of economic history. Water course were dug out and canals and wells for irrigation are also mentioned. Well-wheels (*araghatta*) are also referred to. The Vedic period is followed by the age of the *Brahmanas* down to 600 B. C. Later *Samhitas, Aranyakas, Brahmanas, Upanishadas* and others come into prominence. West recedes in importance and regions east of Kuru-Panchal come into prominence. Advance of civilisation is seen also in the more extended knowledge of metals such as *hiranya, ayas, shyam, Lauha, Shisa, epu* etc. Gold, silver, copper, iron, lead, mercury, tin etc. are also mentioned in the *Ramayan*. Apastamba and Baudhayan, in their *sutras*, depict the life of the country as mainly rural and they do not describe any ceremony for urban life. The *Arthashastra* of Kautilya gives us an idea of the extent of state control. How practical Kautilya was will be evident from his following observation—"When a king finds himself in a financial trouble and needs money, he may employ a spy in the garb of a rich merchant or a real rich merchant famous for his vast commerce who would borrow from the corporation bar gold and then allow himself to be robbed of it the same night." He says—"Wealth and wealth alone are important in as much as charity and desire depend upon wealth for their realisation".

Besides the *Ramayan* and the *Mahabharat*, Manu, Yajnavlkya, Visnu Narad, Brihaspati, Katyayan, Varahmihir, Bana, Sudrak, Dandin and various others also throw a flood of light on different aspects of the contemporary economic history. Gautama, Manu and Brihaspati prescribe methods for acquiring property and have laid down elaborate rules to safeguard the lawful owners of property. The injunctions of Manu, Yajnavalkya, Visnu and others provide us with a bulk of theoritical information and they constitute rather a body of moral precepts.

The *Jatakas*, *Vinayapitaka*, *Suttapitaka* and other sources throw light on the economic history of early India. The purpose of the *Sutras* is to afford a clue through the mass of Brahmanical learning and the evidence of the *Jatkas* is drawn mainly from the stories. Instance of collective initiative reveal a relatively advanced sense of citizenship in the villages and the picture, that emerges, is of a rural society. The *Jatakas* reveal a rural economy chiefly based on private ownership as is evident from the *Divyavadana*. The *Chandogya Upnishad*, *Saundaranankavya*, *Jatakas*, Kautilya and Manu and the Asokan inscriptions refer to the importance of roads which played a pivotal role in the inland trade. The *Jatakas* contain plenty of helpful information on economic conditions over a fairly long period. Commercial intercourse between the Ganges and other parts of the world are also referred to.

The works of writers like Scylax, Hecateus of Miletus, Herodotus and others are equally important for a study of economic history. Darius despatched Scylax in 516 B. C. to probe the feasibility of sea passage from the mouth of the Indus to Persia. He did it in thirteen months and this political intercourse further led to mercantile intercoure as well. The Milindapanha, Mahavamsa Mahaniddesa and the Jaina Acharangasutra supply us with considerable information regarding trade and industry and also about the traders. Kalidas, Visakhadatta, and other writers between the fifth and the twelfth century A. D. portray the then economic condition.

Varahmihir's works throw light on agriculture, cattle-rearing. trade and commerce, prosperity, adversity and famine but he is silent about industries. The *Amarakosa* and *Kamasutra* also throw light on the economic aspect. Panini, Patanjali and Katyayan are invaluable sources of study in so far as economic history is concerned. Narad refers to *Dinar*. Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* (RT) is an invaluable source of information.

Archaeological discoveries, epigraphy and numismatics and other indigenous sources enable us to build up a connected story of the economic life of ancient India. Inscriptions serve as a reliable source as they contain informantion about land system, guilds, traders, kinds of taxes and irrigational measures. A number of West Indian inscriptions and those from Junagadh and Hathigumpha describe matters connected with land system, guilds, trade taxes and local irrigational measures. The coins, too, throw significant light on economic history. Coins helped transactions on a large scale and contributed to the growth and development of trade. We get largest number of coins in the post-Mauryan period. In the post-Mauryan and post-Kushan periods, inscriptions and coins are our primary source materials.

South Indian literature and more specially the *Sangama* literature produced over a period of three to four centuries is a major source of information for the social and economic life of the people of Tamilnadu and its statement about trade and commerce is attested by foreign accounts, archaeological finds of the region and inscriptions. The South Indian inscriptions are very important for our purpose. The *Paraskar Grhyasutra* is also an important source of study. The temple documents and papers connected with the temple organisations of South India are equally important for study of economic history.

Foreign travellers' accounts throw considerable light on the subject of economic activities. Megasthenes, Greek and Roman accounts of the first and second centuries A. D., Ptolemy's geography Pliny's '*NaturalHistory*' and thewritings of Strabo and Agatharchides are some of the important sources for our purpose. The Greek and Roman writers mention many Indian ports and enumerates items of trade between India and Roman empire. *Periplus* is the most important source. It contains an account of South India via the coast line of South Arabia and Western India of the first century A. D. The writer himself had the personal experience of ports, market towns and the goods exported and imported by the Erythraean Sea (Red Sea and the Arabian Sea). He is our best guide in matters concerning India's trade with Western world. The name of the author is unknown. He made voyages from Red Sea to India. It is a valuble and trustworthy account of the early trade and maritime activity between India and Western countries. The narrative is based on actual experience. It is a guide book for merchants as it reveals an astonishingly detailed geographical knowledge of Red Sea, Arabian Sea, East African and Indian coasts. Erythraean Sea is the name given by Greek and Romans to the Indian Ocean including Red Sea and Persian Gulf. Ptolemy utilised *Periplus*.

Book VII of Ptotemy describes India upto and beyond Ganges. Pliny speaks of Indian minerals and precious stones as being the best in the World. Cosmas Indicopleustel (535-47), author of *Christian Topography*, was a merchant and visited a number of countries including India. He ultimately became a monk. He gives a good idea about the commerce and geography of his time. He informs us of African and Indian animals, South Indian peppers and also about Ceylon as a great centre of world commerce connecting India, China, Africa, Persia and Byzantine. Procopius (527) throws light on India's trade relations with Byzantine empire. The Law Digest of Justinian gives list of commodities imported from India. Megasthenes, Fahien, Hiuentsang, Itsing, Arab travellers and geographers and businessmen, Alberuni and a host of visiting traders from different parts of the world have left their accounts of India and these are valuable source material for a reconstruction of the early economic history of India. As early as 1918, N. N. Law collected a list of printed books and manuscripts dealing with the subject matter of economics (*IA*–XLVII–1918–P. 253). The sources have to be critically analysed and weighed as most of them are written unscientifically. They have to be used with caution. So far a literary sources are concerned, they have to be stratified and then chronologically arranged to enable us to present a scientific study. These sources are undated and there is likelihood of these sources being interpolated, mixed and containing various layers. Epigraphic, numismatic and archaeological sources are comparatively more reliable and dependable. We give below an approximate dating of the literary sources :—

(i) Vedic Samhitas—1500-1000 B. C.
(ii) Rigveda—1200 B. C. (Book X is post-Rigvedic)
(iii) Later Vedic Texts—1000-500 B. C.
(iv) Upnishadas—1000-500 B. C.
—Many complied after 500 B. C. including Up-Srautsutras and Brahmanas.
(v) Dharmasutras (Earliest Law books)—620-200 B. C.—
—Apastamba and Baudhayan are the ealiest followed by Gautama and Vasistha.

Dharmasutras deal with laws regarding taxation and protection of property. Here we get the first systematic exposition of the Brahmanical view of the socio-economic and political order. *Visnudharmasutra* (300-100 B.C.) with addition down to 7th Century A. D.

(vi) Dharmashastras cover all kinds of legal text including commentaries developed into Smritis written in verse and the oldest is that of Manu-*Manusamhita* or the *Manavadharmashastra* (C. 200 B. C.—A. D. 200), *Visnusmriti*, *Yajnavalkyasmriti* (A.D. 200-400)—here Manu's matter has been arranged in a more concise manner. It has many provisions in common with *Arthashastra*. V. N. Romanov has recently published a paper on the ancient Indian ethical ideas on the basis of the Dharmashastras. Attention is paid to the *arthavada* in which evaluations and motivations are given for the different rules of behaviour. According to the scholar, this sort of approach made it possible to bring out the dialectical connection between the ethical concepts of Hinduism and the magico-ontological notions of the Brahamana texts. Here is an explantion for the integral perception of the basic themes like food, purification, *samskaras* and the performance of royal functions. (Cf.—*Vestynic Dreveni Istori*—No. 3-1980—pp. 141-153.)

Vigyaneshwara wrote a commentary on Yajnavalkya which came to be known as *Mitakasara* (C. 11th century A. D.). It formed the basis of the Hindu civil law. *Dharmashasastras* exalted the Brahmanas and *Arthashastra* exalted the authority of the king. Medhatithi wrote a commentary on Manu. There was also one Smriti known as *Samkhalikhitasmiriti* (300-100 B. C.).

(vii) Three completely legal *Smritis* of Narad, Brihaspati and Katyayan (C. A. 300-600) treat law under eighteen titles (Civil—14 and Criminal 4) and these, taken together, from a landmark in the legal history of India.

(viii) Smriti portions found in the *Puranas* and *Mahabharat* C, 200 B. C.—A. D. 200).

(ix) *Mahabharat*—Narrative portion (10th century B. C.) descriptive and didactic portion (4th century A. D.) Sabhaparva (Ist century B. C.)

Rajadharma Section inserted after fourth century A. D. in the Shantiparva which mentions Greeks, Sakas and Pahlavas of the Ist century A. D.

(x) *Ramayana*—(200 B. C.—A. D. 200)—the earliest mention is in some Jain and Buddhist Texts in the First century of the Christian era.

(xi) *Puranas*—Vayu, Visnu and Markandey and Matsya (300-600 A. D.) —Visnu may be a bit earlier.

(xii) *Arthashastra*—(300-200 B. C. but according to a recent computerised study, it has been placed in A. D. 245 by Trautman.) It is more practical and less influenced by religion. It is written in prose in Sutra style and it was prevalent till the first century B. C.

(xiii) *Kamandikiya Nitisar*—(400-800 A. D.)

(xiv) *Panini*—5th century B. C.

Patanjali's commentary on Panini belongs to second century B. C.

(xv) *Sukranitisara*—(900-1900 A. D.).

(xvi) Pali Buddhist Canon (400-300 B. C.)

(xvii) Jain Svetamvara Canon (100-200 A. D.)

(xviii) *Budhacharita* and *Saudarananda* of Ashwaghosh (100-200 A. D.)

(xix) Bhasa—(100-200 A. D.)

(xx) *Panchatantra*— (100-200 A. D.)

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(xxi) *Mahavagga, Chullavagga, Vinayapitaka*—1st century B. C.

(xxii) *Jatakas*—Second century B. C.

(xxiii) *Dighanikaya*—3rd century B. C.

(xxiv) *Mahavastu*—Ist century B. C.

(vxv) Jain (texts complied in the Sixth century A. D. and the *Jain Puranas* between 800-900 A. D.

3. Significance of Vartta :—

Kautilya established the applied science of economic theory known as *Vartta* derived from *Vritti*, that is livelihood. *Vartta* has been studied in relation to labour, production, distribution and exchange by ancient Indian thinkers. The system has been described as *Lokavyavahar*. *Vartta* indicated national economy and was the source of life. Kautilya has rightly laid great emphasis on the study and practical application of *Vartta* for national reconstruction. It crystallised as a branch of learning and was devoted to the systematic study of the material interests of the people, their economic welfare, its preservation and development. It formed a significant part of human knowledge in ancient India as is evident from its frequent reference in the *Ramayana*, *Mahabharat* and *Arthashastra*.

Vartta was one of the chief branches of study and a class of teachers taught *Vartta* to the students and some of these were granted help from the State. Sankararya the commentator of Kamandaka, mentions a treatise on cattle rearing and cattle treatment by Gautam and Salihotra. He mentions a treatise on agriculture by Parasar and another on trade composed by Videharaj With the exception of Parasar, other works are now lost to us. The *Atharvaveda* was solely devoted to the discussion of the means of acquisition of wealth and thus included *Vartta* and other branches of study. The application of the principle of *Vartta* within the State by competent men was the lookout of the sovereign who had to learn *Vartta*. *Vartta* has been described as the root or the basis of the universe. It is prescribed in the courses of studies for the princes for a practical knowledge of the same. *Vartta* is rooted in the country (*janapapdamulaka*). *Vartta* was possibly formed at a time when arts and crafts did not play a significant role in the economic life of the society. Arts and crafts are not included in the *Vartta*. In the *Arthashastra* a part from the consideration of defence, the emphasis is upon facilities for the pursuit of *Vartta* and even warlike *Samghas* like Kamboja and Saurastra region engage in *Vartta* peace time.

The principal vocations are recognised as providing men with the means of livelihood, namely, agriculture, cattle-breeding and trade and usury and has been described as pursuits open for the amassment of fortune. Of these cattle-rearing is in the Epics as important and universal an occupation as agricultural farming, The four familiar *Varttas* did not comprise all occupations of the people. Men had to seek livelihood beyond this and a number of independent professions crystallised to meet the complex demands of urban life. Mankhali Gossalla refers to four thousand nine hundred kinds of occupation. It is said that because of *Vartta* the state receives grain, cattle, money, and various kinds of products. It also supplied *Visti* (forced labour). Because *Vartta* sustains treasury and army it becomes possible for the state to hold its own people and the enemies in check. One kind of *Samgha* is called *Varttasashtropajivinah* (the military guilds of professional soldiers who lived by the practice of arms). They adopted *Vartta* (agriculture, cattle rearing and trade) as their profession (*AS*—BK—XI). According to Kautilya, the Kambojas, Saurastras, Kshatriyas, *Srenis* and others practised *Vartta*.

Among the duties of the Sudras, *Karukusilakarma* is distinguished from *Vartta*. Kautilya includes *Karusilpiganah* as one of the items of State income. The *Devipurana* adds *Karmanta* (that is manufacturers) to the subdivisions of *Vartta* and in that sense. it becomes co-extensive with modern economic science dealing with production, distribution and exchange of wealth. *Vartta*, thus, is science of wealth. It indicates economic pursuits of man, stands for profession or means of livelihood, envisages economic structure based on agriculture, art, ctafts, trade, industry and banking business. *Vartta* is instrumental in bringing power to the fore It not only deals with material wealth but also lays stress on labour and includes banking. Labour was necessary for the growth of wealth and monetary transaction was also one of the principles of *Vartta* which also included trade. According to Narad, in the proper development of *Vartta* lay the happiness of the people.

Narad asks Yudhisthir—"Is your *Vartta* looked into by goodmen ?" *Vartta* is the central point of currency and in carrying on production. The business of *Vartta* has been taken as a whole in the production and sale of commodities. The princes thought it their bounden duty to encourage the various branches of *Vartta* and to help the classes engaged in these activities.

Vartta was thus naturally recognised as a prominent element of the state. It was held on par with the triple *Vedas* and *dandaniti*, The constituents of *Vartta* provide sustenance to human race. It has been held that people departing from the laws of *Vartta* would perish and it is a great pointer to the importance of agriculture in our economic life. That is why the *Vartta* was a part of royal education. It was a source of grain, cattle and gold and also forest produce. It compressed the occupations connected with all these aspects including trade. Kautilya, Manu and the author of *Milindapanha* include agriculture, cattle-breeding and trade whereas *Shantiparva* includes under it money-lendidg. *Baudhayan* and *Shantiparva* suggest that the study of the *Vedas* and the pursuit of agriculture are compatible and inter-dependent. According to Kamandaka the means of subsistence of a Vaisya are cattle-rearing, cultivation and trade and that the occupation of those who live by these means is called *Vartta*. *Vartta* was recognised as being so important for the welfare of the society that Kamandaka advised that those who were proficient in *Vartta* should be assured of freedom from want. Kalidas includes cultivation and animal husbandry within it as a great source of national wealth. According to Sukra, usury and commerce came under the province of *Vartta*.

All round development of agriculture, industry and trade characterises the economic life of the people in ancient India. This was partly due to private enterprise and partly to State management and control. Ancient Indian economy thus provides an intersting study in all aspect—land and agricultural economy, trade and commerce, profession and guild, labour and wages, banking and interest, a regulated monetary system etc. Normally political disturbances did not disrupt economic activities. The villagers pursued a variety of cottage industries which some times formed the economic basis of the village organism.

It has been rightly suggested that so long as the king cherishes the *Vartta* everything goes on well. According to Bhisma, wisemen were expected to take up agriculture and tillage and thereby the acquisition of crops. The *Jatakas* and the *Vinayapitaka* speak of tillage, trade, harvesting and money-lending as four important honest callings. King of Mithila discovered Sita while ploughing the field. Ploughing was a part of royal education in the scheme of *Vartta*. The Buddhist literature also support this contention of ploughing the field by the king and state functionaries.

The aim of *Vartta* was severely practical and its business was to guide the trader, the agriculturists, the cattle trainer, the artisans, the industrialists, the statesman, the teacher and the cultivators. It was in that sense a full fledged economic science and it ccupied an important place in ancient Indian studies as in evident ofrom the emphasis on *Vartta* in the *Mahabharat*. In the *Varna* scheme, these occupations (under *Vartta*) were assigned to the Vaisyas. The king should compel Vaisyas and Sudras to follow the task allotted to them because if they deviated from their duties they would throw the whole world into confusion. According to the Buddhist sources, a date was fixed for State ploughing. A successful ruler always keeps an eye on the acquisition of *Vartta*, the root of the universe and the sustainer of human race.

4. Nature of early Indian Economy :

The economy of India was mainly rural. It was based on a system of village communities of peasant proprietorship. There is no reference to feudal lords in the early literary sources. When Videhan king abandon the world, he renounces both his capital, that is, the city of Mithila seven *Yojanas* in circumference and his realm of sixteen hundred *gamas*. There was no hard and fast line between *gama* and *nigama*. Majority of the holdings were small, but estates of one thousand *Karisas* (acres) or more, farmed by the Brahmanas, are also found in the *Jatakas*. Brahmana Kasibhardwaj employed five hundred ploughs and hired men.

The *Sutras* of Apastamba and Baudhayan despise cities. The post Vedic period is marked by the knowledge of towns and of a developed city life. The position to settled way of life based on cultivation was promoted by the emergence of iron. Iron was used for various types of productive activity. The chief source of wealth lay in herd and the war was endeavour to acquire more herd in the beginning. Smiths, potters, carpenters, jewellers, armour makers, chariot makers, emerge on the scene and iron promoted more advanced craftsmanship. Urban centres went hand in hand with the advancement of crafts. Highly esteemed skills were those of the carpenters and blacksmiths who made agricultural implements, weapons and built houses. Distinct groups of professional traders also emerged. Inequality stemmed from difference in property rights. The appearance of a form of slavery is a clear pointer to the development of economic and social inequality.

As an economic entity the country was reckoned as one of paramount importance. Its flora, fauna and mineral products were of the greatest use and benefit and the climate influenced the commercial life of the people. Kautilya regarded the country as the source of all wealth and was placed *third* in importance in his discussion on the elements of State. According to Kautilya the following requisites are necessary :

(i) Capital cities should exist in the centre of its borders.

(ii) It should be productive.

(iii) It should be repulsive of enemies.

(iv) It should contain fertile lands with mines, minerals and forests.

(v) It should comprise of land and waterways.

(vi) It should have the capacity of bearing the burden of a vast army.

(vii) Inhabitants should be of active habits and noted for their loyalty and good character.

5. Canonical attitude :

The attitude of canon law towards economic development is a factor to be reckoned with. The Brahmanical *smritis* looked upon agriculture, industry and to a less extent trade with high disfavour. This attitude is reflected in Manu's dictum (IV. 5.6) the agriculture is *pramrita* (which causes many deaths) and trade is *satymrita* (a mixture of trade and falsehood). Manu has prescribed trade as the best occupation for a Vaisya. A Brahman or a Kshatriya, even in distress, must avoid agriculture which caused injury to many beings. Manu includes craft and trade along with agriculture among the causes leading to the degradation of families. A large number of agricultural, pastoral, industrial and commercial operations are placed under social, religious and even legal disabilities under the *Smriti* laws.

A person making a sea voyage is excluded from the *Shradha* ceremony. The shop-keeper, oilmen, maker of bows and arrows, agriculturists, shepherds and keeper of buffaloes are excluded from the functions connected with *Shradha*—thus these persons are placed under a social ban. Food given by a carpenter, tailor, leather-cutter, and artisans, is not to be eaten by a *Snataka*. Superintending mines of all sorts and executing great mechanical works are included among the smaller sins. Brahmanas who rear cattle or are traders or mechanics are to be treated as Sudras in the law courts. Presents from oil manufacturers are not to be accepted. Seafaring Brahmanas are excluded from *Shradhas*.

While allowing a Brahmana in extreme distress to live by vaisya's occupation, the *Smritis* expressly debar him not only from agriculture but from various specified branches of industry and trade. The Buddhist monks are forbidden to cultivate land. The Jaina canon forbids laymen to engage in agricultural operations and a certain number of trade and industry. We learn from *Uvasagadasao* and Haribhadra's *Yogasastra* that fifteen ways of earning a livelihood are forbidden to laymen including making and selling of charcoal and plants, hoeing and ploughing fields, digging wells, draining for preparation of agricultural lands, crushing by machinery, traffic in ivory, lac and juice. The Canon law and Jain and Buddhist prescriptions retarded the application of capital and enterprise to their development. The free movement of labour and capital was restricted by the association of specific trades and industries in particular with particular castes and subcastes. The Jainas and the Buddhists discouraged all attempts to improve the material condition of the people. Manu and Yajnavalkya recognised as a secondary alternative the Sudra's right to pursue the productive occupations, a right which was conceded by the later *Smritis*. Sudras unable to live by personal service are permitted to practice handicrafts.

CHAPTER 2

An Historical Survey

1. Process of development :—

The history of human society is the history of development of the means of production and a distinct social system corresponds to a particular phase in the development of production techniques. The neanderthal man gave room to modern man through various stages of development. Clan groups replaced the herds of primitive men and the rise of clan was a revolutionary step. Under the clan organisation, the process of development was exceedingly low and primitive but its specific feature was its classless character. Community of economic life was founded on the collective possession of means of production and on collective works of all members of a clan. As the productive forces advanced, man took to settled cultivation and cattle breeding where situations were favourable. Barter emerged. There was an unprecedented development of productive forces during the Mesolithic and Neolithic ages. War between clans and tribes and accompanying plunder made the clan chief stronger and economically powerful. Economic changes became imminent.

The emergence of metal tools gave further incentive to man's productive abilities leading to the production and accumulation of surplus through the exploitation of human labour. The expansion of class relationship not only undermined the clan organisation but gave rise to antagonistic classes. Community of economic life came to be based on the expanding public division of labour and on the rudiments of commodity production.

In the mesolithic period bows and arrows were invented and new types of stone implements known as microliths manufactured for use as inserts. At the close of the mesolithic period, the first ceramic artifacts emerged. First animals were domesticated and first attempts were made in the cultivation of land. Advances in productive forces allowed a portion of population to settle down. This, along with the rudiments of advanced techniques, prompted man to isdperse over under-developed and unsettled areas. By the dawn of neolithic age, areas from Baluchistan to Bihar & Bengal appear to have been inhabited. The neolithic civilisation resulted from the progress of the microlithic culture from the mesolithic age. At the close of the neolithic period and at the turn from the stone age to copper age the farming cultures of north-western India were intimately connected with the contemporary cultures of Iraq, Iran, Southern areas of Middle Asia and Afganistan. Taken together they constitute a vast cultural zone known as the Painted Ware culture. The neolithic cultures of North-Eastern India can be grouped into two major complexes traceable as far back as mesolithic times—the culture of Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and Assam. In the domain of material culture, the Painted Grey Ware (*PGW*) people led a settled way of life, cultivating fields and raising cattle. They raised horses, pigs, sheeps, horned cattle, used potter's wheel and manufactured bronze tools and weapons. The first traces of iron making occur in the upper strata of the *PGW* culture.

The development of productive forces led to an increase in social surplus accumulated in the hands of aristocracy, chieftains and priests. Barter and armed conflicts added to the property and social inequality. The economic development was however far from uniform. There was an appreciable economic advance in the last centuries of the first millenium B. C. when we have references to the high level of development of productive forces. According to Plutarch, the Taxila lands were remarkable for their high fertility. Tools and weapons were made of iron. Farming was highly developed. Punchmarked coins appeared. The abundance of Copper coins at various excavated sites indicates that money circulation had penetrated even retail commodity turnover. Karl Marx has noted that in the basin of the Ganges too, the conditions were ripe for transfer to a new and more progressive form of slave owning organisation in this period, a process which seems to be attested by the political history of this period. The establishment of Mauryan empire shows that definite premises for the unification of the country into a state were already in evidence. The decline of urban centres became visible with the growth of feudal mode of production. Along with the development of new feudal relationship, new classes of feudal landowners and unprivileged peasants started taking shape. The ways and means of exploitation of the unprivileged groups revealed more and more distinctly features basic to the feudal mode of production.

From the use of the objects of nature and gathering of natural products to elementary cultivation was a great revolution in the development of productive forces. The productive forces led to the formation of new productive relations inside the society. The separation of stock breeding from food gathering and hunting was the first great social division of labour. The separation of agriculture from stock breeding was another social division and their major division was the separation of trade from stock breeding and agriculture. Cattle was the principal object of barter and was the first to become private property. With private property began the process of transformation of product into a commodity. Product manufactured for exchange or sale, is termed a commodity. With the division of labour, a man's labour yielded more than he consumed and labourer acquired a surplus value. Surplus value is the value created by the labour of a worker over and above the value of his wage and appropriated by others without payment. The development of handicrafts and the growth of exchange led to the foundation of town. The life and activities of the urban population began to differ from those of the rural population.

The main advances may be taken as follows—

(i) The urban but stagnant Indus Valley which left its mark on Indian civilisation (3000-1500 B. C.)

(ii) Aryanisation—late bronze and early iron—pastoral—nomadic tribal organisation developing into classes by 800 B. C. onwards.

(iii) A primitive feudalism whereby the peninsula was properly developed for trade and agriculture since the age of the Satvahanas.

(iv) Emergence of private propetry in land began earlier than 400 A. D.

(v) Feudalism began in the late Gupta period and continued unabated—

The chief features of the early Indian economic history include—

(i) A systematic study of the use and introduction of iron and its impact—

(ii) A survey of economic history down to sixth century B. C.—

(iii) A study of the village system.
(iv) Agriculture and Industry.
(v) Trade and Commerce.
(vi) Currency and Banking.
(vii) Economic status of common man in ancient India.
(viii) Various other allied economic problems.
(ix) Feudalism—etc.

2. Introduction and use of iron —

The amount of material archaeological data has enormously increased in recent years as a result of which there is a better understanding of the chronological and cultural stages covering early stages of Indian history. It should be noted that there is no established all India chronological framework. Allchin's '*Birth of Indian Civilisation*' contains a separate section on technology. His studies of the neolithic artifacts from Karnataka and Santhal Pargana are important contributions to the study of the Indian neolithic artifacts. Metal technology came from various sources and in the central, Deccan and West Indian Chalcolithic cultures were probably largely indigenous. The problem of iron technology has been considerably discussed in recent years (*IHQ*—III. pp.793-802).

The introduction and use of iron in ancient India had its bearing on the material life of the people. It appears that the *Rigveda* represents the bronze age whereas the *Yajurveda* mentions iron. *Ayas* is iron and the smith who produced objects of *Ayas* is called *Karmakara*. This metal is described as reddish. The *Vayasenayisamhita* mentions *ayas*, *hiranya* (gold), *loha* (copper), *shyama* (iron), *sisa* (lead) and *trapu* (tin). The users of the *PGW* used iron and occurrence of iron at a number of sites is a landmark in the evolution of iron in India. Iron objects have been found at a number of recently excavated sites and it appears that the country had stepped into iron age by the second half of the First millenium B. C. The process of smelting iron was also known and by seven hundred B. C. iron was used by the Aryans in India. There was extensive manufacture of iron objects at Ujjain. Wheeler found iron-using people at Brahmagiri and various iron objects have been discovered from different parts of South India. Iron weapons have been discovered at Ujjain, which shows an iron age urban culture.

D. D. Kosambi, depending on the *Suttanipata*, points out a clear reference to iron ploughshares. The wide use of iron in agriculture implies a reasonably earlier beginning and he puts the date in seven-eight hundred B. C. (*JESHO*—VI—309-318). B. C. Gordon suggested that iron was introduced in India only between 600-700 B. C. B. R. Subramanyam has shown on the basis of archaeological data that the earliest evidence of iron came from the Doab in the eleventh-tenth centuries B. C. (*JOI*—XIII. 349-359) and by second century B. C, the whole of India was familiar with the use of iron. South India and Orissa entered the iron age in the Fourth Century B. C. *PGW* was the earliest iron using culture in India and it represented the Aryans who brought this technology (*JAIH*—III—pp. 293-94). D. K. Chakravarti has shown that Central India (around 1000 B. C.) was the earliest iron using centre in the sub-continent (*IS—PP*. XIV. 329-38). The use of iron led to a better agricultural stability and a noticeable change in the material prosperity of the people. Though the impact of the beginning iron in India was slow, its revolutionary role in bringing about social change can be perceived in the sixth century B. C. An attempt to correlate the early data with the widespread pre-industrial use of iron is yet a desideratum. It should be noted here that in a country of India's size no technological or productive element is likely to have evolved simultaneously and its impact in different areas may not have been the same.

The *Chandogya Upanishad* mentions the use of iron. *Ayas* in the Sutra literature is differentiated as red and black. The *Amarakosa* gives seven names of iron and two names for the iron rust. There is reference to a blacksmith beating a piece of iron with the help of steel hammer. Indian iron attained maturity by the sixth century B. C. and Herodotus bears testimony to this aspect. Ktesias praises the sword of Indian steel. According to Curtius, Alexander received from Poros a gift of thirty pounds of steel. Pliny refers to swords of Indian steel. Indian iron is mentioned in the *Periplus* as imports into Abyssinian ports. Roman trade in Indian iron was an important feature of contemporary trade. The technical knowledge in iron working reached its high watermark during the Gupta period. The Mehrauli iron pillar is a standing monument of Indian workmanship in iron and a bronze Buddha image from Sultanganj is the greatest example of the metallurgical knowledge of the early Indians. The *Amarakosa* gives five names for the ploughshares.

By the time of the *NBP* culture, a distinctive cultural phase in Indian history, iron had become very common and dominant metal. The improved iron technology is reflected in the black colour of the slip of the northern black polished ware which was nothing but the result of the black magnetic iron oxide through a particular firing process. Iron is also connected with the rapid specialisation in arts and crafts in the age of Buddha and we have a reference to twenty-eight crafts in the *Dighanikaya*. The use of iron tools and tiled rings made possible the digging of wells and tanks.

The extensive use of iron enlarged the fields of exploitation of nature and strengthened the foundation of material civilisation. The practice of agriculture spread over a vast area and surplus supplied the needs of a growing population in the urban area. It brought about a revolutionary change in the method of production, helped the growth of agricultural process, made it easier to build houses, carts and ships. As compared to copper, iron was much cheaper and peasants and artisans could afford to have iron tools. The improved iron implements not only accelerated process of development but also relieved pressure of work on land, provided liesure which enabled the liesured class to go in for higher speculation in the realm of thought and culture. Jainism and Buddhism were the products of such a situation. Even the rise of Magadh is attributed to the widespread use and availability of iron in Bihar.

The following radical changes were brought about by the introduction and use of iron :—

(i) Clearing of land became easy and thick jungles were cleared by iron axe.

(ii) With the rise of the individual ownership of tools of production, private property came into existence.

(iii) Metal workers got honoured position in the society;—iron weapons were in great demand.

(iv) There sprang up wealthy landowning classes and trading community.

(v) The importance of iron in making available a large amount of surplus foodgrains to feed the urban people. This urbanisation in the historic period is distinguished by the use of metallic money and other objects.

The change brought in the instrument of production and the development of trade and the rise of new towns meant accumulation of new property. Iron enabled the king and the nobles to develop into a select class of armed warriors over the rest of the tribe as a privileged caste. It made important contribution to the overall development of Indian economy and we may call it the technological basis of the economic progress. Urbanisation brought sophistication in all walks of life. The large scale production was associated with the rise and flourishing of urban centres and establishment of well organised markets. Between Kaveri and Kapilavastu we have a list of sixtyone towns in the age of Buddha. By sixth century B. C. iron industry was geared to meet the requirements of rising political states. The wide distribution and extensive metallurgical activities in the Fourth Century B. C. suggest that the knowledge of iron technology had diffused all over the country and it had acquired maturity. An iron smelting site of this period has been discovered in Gujrat. The technology of working in India, though simple, was laborious.

Iron technology united people over different regions and helped to evolve a common cultural pattern. Urbanisation indicates the strong base of technical heritage. A wide range of technical objects is an index of technical advancement and also of their economic well being. Among the Daimabad bronzes, the bullchariot is the most remarkable. The buffalo is modelled in a naturalistic manner. Though belonging to the pre-historic period, this mechanism marks an early stage in the evolution of the wheel (1800-1600 B. C.). It should be noted here that the archaeologists and historians do not see eye to eye on the chronological demarcation regarding complex relationship of iron technology. The advent of iron had a tremendous potential of changing peoples' way of life. The evidence of the *Satpath-Brahmana* gives the impression that it was no longer a mere subsistence economy because we see that certain classes in the society were thriving on the surplus food production. The excellence of iron technology can be seen in the

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massive pillar at Delhi, in the 12th Century beams used in Konark and Fifteenth century iron pillar at Dhar.

3. General Survey of Economic Life upto Sixth Century B. C. :—

The Indus culture was chalcolithic and urban surrounded by villages upon whose agricultural surplus the towns depended. Our knowledge of the economic condition of the pre-historic period is yet incomplete but the archaeological discoveries at various sites indicate that the creators of the civilisation were food collectors and belonged to the early stone age. From the dwellings of the Pre-Harappan sites it is evident that they knew agriculture and made some progress in pottery making. These were polychromed and bore geometric designs. Black on red and buff colours were used.

Among the agricultural products in the Indus valley mention may be made of wheat, barley, sesame, field peas etc. Particular species of cotton were also cultivated. The excellent sanitation system by underground drainage, the pillared hall, the great bath with hydropathic arrangements and multistoreyed buildings testify to a high degree of economic progress and engineering skill. The annual floods contributed to the fertility of the soil. They excelled in the art of metallurgy. The metal smiths manufactured weapons and implements in Copper and Bronze by the technique of casting and forging. It appears that a strong central government regulated the economic life of the people. The graduated system of weights and measures, the granary, and even the uniform size of bricks corroborate this point. An examination of various stones and metals would indicate inland, foreign, overland and riverine and Oceanic trade and that formed the mainstay of the economy. There was direct trade contact between India and West Asia.

In contrast to the Indus Valley, the aryans were mainly agriculturists. The Rigvedic people possessed better knowledge of agriculture and also possessed knowledge of different seasons. Cattle breeding formed an important occupation. Pasture land was enjoyed in common. Private ownership over *Vastu* (homestead) and *Ksetra* (arable land) was recognised but the land did not form a well-established type of private property. The King was entitled only to a part of the produce (*Balihrita*). Ploughs were drawn by the oxen and the harvest was reaped with sickle, tied in bundles and threshed on the *Khala* (threshing floor). Agriculture depended mainly on monsoon but irrigation was also known (*Khanitrimapah*). It was raised by a pulley (*Chakra*). Agricultural products included *Yava* and *Dhanya.* Carpentry, weaving, spinning and tanning were known. Weavers made different kinds of clothes. Tanners made bags and pots of leather. Potter's art was known and so also the distillation of wine (*Soma* or *Sura*). Gold and Copper were known. There was no stigma attached to manual labour. Janaka lent his hand to the plough and Balram is called *Haldhara.* Economic life was very simple. Later on, wheat, rice, barley and various other products came to be known and used. Cotton is first mentioned by Panini.

The later Vedic texts distinguish between *Lohitayas* and *Krishnavas* (Iron) and thus a significant advance was made. Small towns came into existence. The *Atharvaveda* passages contain prayers for security of trade. The later Vedic period saw the rise of diverse arts and crafts. Agriculture and various crafts enabled them to lead a settled life. Peasants maintained their chiefs with frequent tributes. In the Vedic society differences based on property ownership are discernible, and we have examples of a rich elite and extremely poor strata of population. In the later Vedic period, there are details of donations and purchase of land although property rights were by and large subject to the will of the tribe. Cultivated plots were made over to individual members of the tribe and in course of time they grew rich and enjoyed a privileged position while other members were impoverised. Slavery appear as part of society. The agrarian character of the economy is evident. There is evidence or indication of private ownership of cultivated land. Land was reclaimed by clearing the forests. The emergence of mercantile community led to the emergence of a stable medium of exchange. Articles of trade included garments, coverlets, and goatskin. Sale, barter and exchange of merchandise were known.

Rathakara (chariot maker) was respected and was the most important among the workers. There is also a reference to hundred oared boat. The Vedic aryans used gold ornaments. Copper was used for making agricultural, household and military equipment like helmet and body armour. Silver and iron were unknown to the

Rigvedic people. Details of agricultural operations are available from the Vedic literature. Trade and commerce had not yet interested the early Aryans though situation changed in the later Vedic period. The *Vajasenayisamhita* mentions various item of agricultural produce. Linen and hemp came to be used for the manufacture of garments. One significant advance in the field of metallurgy was the introduction of iron which, in course of time, revolutionised the economic life.

The medium of exchange took a definite shape. The emergence of mercantile community, who lived by trade and commerce, led to the introduction of a stable medium of exchange. *Niska* (though referring to necklace) was sometimes used for money. It appears to have a definite weight. In the later Vedic period, *Krsnala* and *Satamana* came into use. *Pada* (one fourth of a *Satamana*) was also known. Panini mentions stamped coins such as *Kamsya*, *Satmana*, *Karsapana*, *Pana*, *Pada*, *Niska*, *Rupya* etc.

In the field of trade and commerce, Indian mercantile activities go back to very early times. There was direct trade contact between India and west Asia in the Pre-Sargonic period (C. 2300 B. C.). The bulk of this trade was sea-borne. The overland trade route did not run further West than the Eastern border of Iranian Makran. Trade and commerce formed the mainstay of the economy of the Harappans. The Harappan merchants had their own quarters in the Sumerian towns. Cotton formed an important item of export from India. There were recognised trade routes. Apart from camels, pack horses were used for transport. Riverine and oceanic trades were carried by boats. Lothal was an important port.

There are references to traders in the Vedic literature. The *Atharvaveda* contains prayer to Indra for protection against ill will, wild beasts and highway robbers. Invested capital was called *Dhana*. The mention of *Samudra* in the *Rigveda* possibly signifies either the lower course of the Sindhu or the sea. The references to Varuna's knowledge of sea-route, Bhujyu's ship wreck and consequent rescue by the Asvins with a vessel of one hundred oars and the legend of Dirghatamas etc. clearly allude to maritime trade. The use of indigo in the clothes of Egyptian mummies, Indian Cedar in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar, and Indian teak in the temple of moon god at Ur perhaps shows the continuity of Indian commercial relations.

with west Asia. The *Panis* constituted the niggardly merchant class of the *Rigveda*.

The literary sources like the *Ramayana, Mahabharata* and the *Puranas* and the Pali texts speak of scores of urban settlements along the whole length of Ganga Valley. During the first millinium B. C. or even a bit earlier, there emerged village settlements marked by a small scale agrarian economy. They were *PGW* people who were followed by the *NBP* people and the period saw the rise of territorial states. It was during this period that iron came to be used increasingly. There had been distinct development on the economic front, specially an increasing knowledge of agriculture and the consequent growth of a strong agrarian base—a fact attested by the *Satpatha Brahmana*. The period witnessed the advent of money and increasing trading activities. Thus by the Fourth Century B. C. the necessary concomitants for the growth of urban economy, *viz*. surplus food, craft's specialisation, trade, centres of exchange, use of money, a political organisation ensuring order and a literate society, are present. It is characterised by the patronage of jwellers and artisans catering to the tastes of a liesured class, courtesans, inns, gambling houses etc. The Mauryas consolidated their economic base and the period is marked not only by a characteristic uniformity in cultural and economic terms but also for the extensive monetisation of economy. The period between 150 B. C. and A. D. 320 represents the most mature phase of urbanisation. The growth of monetisation is proved by the fact that various aspects of money-lending occupy a conspicuous place in the law-books of the age.

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CHAPTER—3

A brief Survey of Economic Life from 6th Century B.C. to 7th Century A.D.

1. 600—300 B.C. :—

We have seen above that the widespread use of iron brought about a revolutionary change in the economic history of ancient India in the sixth century B.C. Though India stepped into iron age, the development was uneven in individual region. Iron helped the production of surplus and improvement in the means of transport which gave further impetus to trade. Iron itself became an important item of trade. It helped the overall developing economy. Buddhists insisted on the protection of cattle and the *Suttanipata* explicitly states that they should not be slaughtered because they constituted the source of grain, strength, beauty and happiness. Iron agricultural implements were made. The *Suttanipata* tells of a brahman who ploughed the land using a plough for the purpose. The ploughshare (evidently one made of iron) grew so hot that he had to dip it in water.

Attempts were made to bring virgin soil under cultivation and collective efforts were made in that respect. The services of slaves and hired labourers were pressed into use for the purpose. Panini refers to a systematic survey of agricultural land by *Ksetrakaras*. Baudhayan describes six *Nivartanas* of land as an ideal economic holding. There are references to *Gahapatis* (or peasant proprietors) and *Kutumbikas* (rich peasants) as landowners. Agriculture was developed both intensively and extensively. *Gahapatis* and *Kutumbikas* got their lands cultivated by hired labourers and slaves. The Gangetic Valley was the most developed economic centre. Irrigation was known. Agriculture became the main form of productive labour. Livestock breeding was also important. One rich farmer had a herd of 27000 milching cows. Livestock was branded to avoid ownership dispute. The peasants paid taxes directly to the king. Intermediaries between the king and the tillers of the soil were few and far between though there are reference to *Bhogagamas* (land revenue assigned to the Brahmanas). The tithe varied from one-sixth to one-twelfth, though in case of emergency, taxes in cash were also levied.

The economy of India was mainly rural based on a system of village communities of peasant proprietorship. There is no reference to feudal lords. Though majority of the holdings were small there were estates of one thousand *Karisas* or more farmed by the Brahmanas. Kasi Bhardwaj employed five hundred ploughs. There was a definite anti-alienating and communal feeling. Such an attitude did not allow easy disposal of land by sale or mortgage. Grassland was owned in common.

Though Apastamba and Baudhyan despised cities, the introduction of iron brought a distinct change in the economic outlook and the most distinctive feature of the age was the development of urban economy at a number of centres. Towns multiplied greatly and in towns industries became more localised and specialised and were further organised in guilds. The Buddhist literature mentions eighteen crafts or trade guilds. Traders and artisans were provided with capital by *Mahasethi*, *Sethi* and *Anusethi*. Joint stock companies and guilds of caravan dealers were also there. The trade was quite brisk in the early Buddhist period. The exploration of Sindh by Scylax in the Fifth Centnry B. C. led to the opening of the sea routes which contributed to the opulence of Indian satrapies of the Achaemenian empire. In the Jain literature we have an account of various kinds of urban settlement. Aristobulus saw the remalns of over a thousand towns. There were sixty well known towns spread from Champa to Bhrgukacha and from Kaveripattanam to Kapilavastu. Of these there were twenty big cities and six of them, *viz*, Champa, Rajgrih, Saket, Kausambi, Varanasi and Kusinara were sufficiently important. Pataliputra was the biggest in size and was one of the large cities of ancient times. It had five hundred and seventy towers and more than sixty gates. These towns owed their importance to arts and crafts, Towns were inhabited by artisans and at some places merchants some places there was concentration of artisans.

Saddalaputra of Vaisali had five hundred potters' shop. Rajgrih had eighteen craft guilds and on two occasions the royal procession included eighteen guilds. Specialisation in craft developed account of guild system. Craftsmanship achieved a high level on and finest fabrics were exported to West Asia via Barygaza. King exercised general control over them and had to take into account guild laws.

The urban centres came to be dominated by the *Sethis* who controlled trade and industry and maintained regular contacts with their counterparts in the villages. It has been suggested that the title of *Sethi* was conferred by the King as a post of distinction and such *Sethis* were granted *Bhogagamas*. Their relationship with the guild is not clear. The villages supplied surplus and the towns supplied other necessities to the villagers. The Pali texts speak of three types of villages—

(i) the typical village inhabited by various castes and communities and it was headed by a headman called *Bhojaka*,

(ii) suburban villages were in the nature of craft villages—these served as markets for other villages and linked the town with countryside;

(iii) border villages consisting of fowlers, hunters and leading a backward life.

Taxes were collected by royal agents and there were no intermediate landlords between the peasant and the state. The picture of economy is different from the rural economy of the later vedic period and it is marked by the beginning of urban economy. Traders frequented distant and different trade routes. The *Jatakas* refer to a caravan of five hundred carts. To facilitate navigation the traders pressed into service shore-sighting birds.

Money economy was a marked feature of urbanisation. It facilitated trade. Money economy penetrated to the rural area. *Sethis* are said to have possessed .eighty *Kotis* of rupees. Groups of merchants punched their marks on their coins. The practice of money lending came into vogue. Urban and rural economy developed side by side. In the present state of our knowledge it is not possible to indicate the precise role of the state in the pre-

Mauryan period. It is difficult to say whether the punchmarked coins were issued by the rulers or by a group of traders or merchants. With the advent of money economy, there was an unprecedented expansion of economic activies in the country.

2. 300 B.C.—185 B.C. :—

The rise of the Mauryas witnessed the political unification of the country on a large scale and the orgaisation of administration apparatus on scientific lines. The Mauryas had strong grip over the economic life of the country. The state was the biggest trader and employer. From the testimony of Megasthenes it is evident that there were quite a large number of foreigners at Pataliputra. The currency had stabilised. Kautilya mentions coins of different denominations like *Karsapana, Kakini, suvarna, pana*, etc. There was, an officer to supervise the minting of coins. The concept of credit interest and moneylending had also developed. Apart from overland trade. river and sea routes also came to be used. The Mauryan state had a large standing army.

Private ownership appears to have gained recognition. A difference is made between ownership and use of land. Terms like *Svatva. Swamitva* and *Bhoga* definitely indicate private ownership of land. The *Sutras* and the *Shastras* suggest that men became property owners either by purchasing or by discovering. Legal rights also developed and in Manu farming land is listed among the main types of property. There were of course private, communal and royal land. Property rights were protected. Diodoros's statement does not reflect the actual state of affairs and contradicts materials in the local sources. According to Narad, King is not allowed to violate the principles of private ownership.

The salient features of the economic activities of the state were :—

(1) state control of agriculture, industry and trade and the levy of variety of taxes—

(ii) sufficient surplus was maintained in the treasury against, emergency.

(iii) state regulated numerous economic activities.

(iv) since army and bureaucracy burdened the state exchequer, treasury had to be replenished by new sources of taxes.

Rural Economy—

(v) developed rural economy by founding new settlements by shifting surplus population from the over-populated areas, and also by rehabilitating the decaying villages. Cattle, seed, money, irrigational facilities were given. Sudras were employed to settle down as farmers. Remission of taxes and other concessions were allowed. Retired officials and priests were also granted lands in such area. Lands in these newly found settlements could not be sold, mortgaged or inherited. Erring farmers were replaced by willing farmers.

Villages were classifed as first, middle and low and also those that were free from taxes. This classification was of much help to the government. Each village had a common grazing ground. Villages had definite boundaries, village halls, and independent internal economy. There were six chief officers for running the various departments connected with village. King had fishing, ferrying, trading, and irrigational rights. Villagers were united for common purpose and undertook works of public utility on a co-operative basis. The chief industry in the rural area was agriculture.

The list of taxation in Mauryan times reveals a deliberate attempt on the part of the state to extract as much surplus as possible and even when these could not meet the mounting expenditure of the state, emergency taxation like *Pranaya* was levied, raising money by setting up images of gods, compulsory raising of a second crop etc. were imposed. The whole economy was geared up to the financial needs of the state. The chief tax was the royal share of one-sixth (one-fourth according to the Greek accounts), *pindakara* (assessment on groups of villages), *senabhukta* (involving an obligation on the part of villages to supply provisions for the royal army), *hiranya* (payment in cash), taxes on guilds etc.

The main base of royal power was mining and metallurgy. State enjoyed monopoly in the working of mines and in trade in mineral products. Only state could equip soldiers with metal arms and furnish agriculture and industry with necessary tools and implements. Trade and industries were regulated by means of a number of superintendents and there were twentyseven such superintendents to regulate the economic activities of the State. We shall have occasions (elsewhere in this book) to discuss the role of these authorities in regulating the economy of the country.

3. 185 B.C.—200 A.D. :—

This is a very important period from the economic point of view. It is a period full of economic activities. State efforts seem to have been replaced by individual efforts. There are evidences to show that the theory of private ownership was gaining ground. *Milindapanha*, *Divyavadana*, *Manu*, *Gautama*, *Paraskaragrihyasutra* stand for individual efforts and individual ownership of land. We have examples of autonomous villages where headman administered justice and levied taxes. Vaisyas pursued agriculture and they possessed the necessary technical know-how. Manu says that the acceptance of an untilled field by a Brahman is less blamable than that of a tilled one. The underlying idea of making grant of untilled land to the Brahman was to make it arable. State advanced seed grain and also provided irrigation.

The importance of irrigation was fully recognised. Stringent punishments (including death) have been prescribed for causing any harm to water reservoirs and embankments etc. The virtues of wells and tanks for irrigation purposes have been glorified. Kharavela not only repaired and enclosed a tank in Kalingapuri but also extended and dug an old canal (opened by the Nandas) at the cost of a hundred thousand *panas*. Rudradaman repaired a major breach in the Sudarshan lake in Saurasta region by spending enormous wealth and without imposing any taxes, forced labour and emergency imposition. The Saka and the Kusana rulers also constructed tanks for the purpose. Tanks were also dug by the co-operative efforts of the villagers.

We have epigraphic references to grant of land by merchants, lay worshippers and rulers to Buddhist monks for their support and allied religious purposes. Grants made by the rulers carried freedom from taxation and the unrestricted enjoyment of the donated land. The state made laws for the protection of agriculture. Persons responsible for theft of agriculteral implements were punished. In spite of repeated foreign incursions agriculture was in a flourishing condition but was not looked upon favourably. Persons responsible for destroying boundry marks and selling false seed corn were punished. Village headman levied taxes on king's behalf. Guilds acted as banks.

Arts and crafts were free from state control. The *Dighanikaya* mentions about two dozen trades and the *Milindapanha* mentions seventyfive occupations, about sixty of which were connected with various crafts. Weaving industry was in a developed stage. There are references to thirty varieties of indigenous wool besides Chinese. The quality of cotton goods may be inferred from its comparison with "vapour from milk" or "slough of serpents". Mathura had specialised in *sataka* (a special kind of cloth mentioned by Patanjali). Manu levies taxes on weavers. The *Divyavadana* mentions oilwheel. Various crafts were in a flourishing condition. India was the greatest producer of costly gems, diamonds, pearls, beryls, opal, onix, jasper, etc.

Trade had attained a high standard of development. Traders were to make themselves acquainted with the products and requirements of other countries. The commercial activity may be ascertained from large number of trade. rules and kinds duties with regard to trade & trader. The anarchy reigning in Syria, the growth of hostile empire in Parthia, the Scythian irruptions into Bctaria from beyond the Oxus, the saek by Alexander of important trading centres of Tyre, diverted Indian commerce from the northernly route and made Alexandaria the centre of trade. As early as A.D. 41, route through Egypt to India became known to the Europeans. The discovery of monsoon by Hippalus (A.D.46) gave a great impetus to trade. The sailors were now armed with better knowledge of navigation which enabled them to call at the Indian ports of Bhrgukacha (Broach) and Arikamedu (Pondichery). The economic prosperity depended on maritime commerce. Indian acted as the chief intermediares in Silk trade. The favourable balance of trade resulted in the creation of a gold standard in India. People on the Coromandal coast were engaged in trade with south east Asia and they had an increasing enterprise in that region.

The decline of Indian's trade with Rome was accompanied by the increase in her mercantile relations with south east Asia.

The integration of Mediterranean region and of the Red sea littoral under Rome and that of the Oxus and the Indus valley under the Kusanas were the greatest contributory factors in the growth of trade between the two regions—by holding an advantageous position between China and Rome. Countries under the Kusanas derived immense economic benefit from international commerce. Gandhar and Mathura were the converging points of important trade routes and it opened fresh horizons to Buddhism. Economic prosperity acted as a great helpful factor in the development of new ideas in the sphere of art and religion. It was the trade in transit between western countries and hither Asia that kept the routes in north-west India busy. Through this the two way traffic went on for a considerable period. India received a good deal of gold from the Altai mountains in Central Asia.

Arts and crafts were organised into guilds. Guilds were one of the principal supports of royal power. Guilds led to proficiency and specialisation. There were a number of guilds (the details of which be discussed later in a separate chapter). During this period we get the earliest epigraphic references regarding the existence of guilds. Money was deposited with these guilds for the purpose of providing robes and other necessities of life and also for feeding the Brahmanas. Craftsmen organised in guilds could function independently.

Dinar type gold coins came to be used by the Kusanas and became abundant under the Guptas. Patanjali refers to payment in *Niska* to the *Karmakaras*. Money economy was prevalent in Deccan and also in coastal area. It penetrated deeply into the common peoples of towns and suburbs—it is a development that fits well with the growth of arts and crafts and country's flourishing trade with the West. According to Manu, natural economy dominated the rural area and royal officers were remunerated by the grant of land.

There was a fusion of northern-southern elements under the Satvahanas who were first rulers to make landgrants to Brahmanas. They exploited the mineral resources of the Deccan and developed a very advanced rural economy. The peasants produced enough to support their military strength. In the extreme south, trade constituted the chief source of royal revenue but the real foundation was the regular income from agriculture.

The growing crafts and commerce and the increasing use of money promoted the prosperity of numerous towns. The material remains of the Kusanas display urbanisation at its peak. Ujjain was the nodal point of two trade routes—one from Kausambi and the other from Mathura. It also exported agate and carnelian stones. Towns also flourished under the Satvahanas and carried on thriving trade with the Roman empire. Urban centres suffered setbacks when the Roman empire imposed a ban on trade with India from third Century A.D. onwards. The end of the Kusana empire in the north and of the Satvahana empire in the south gave a deathblow to these urban centres as the towns could not support artisans and merchants.

The large number of coins, issued by various dynasties during the period under review, indicated a developed monetary economy and the gainful trade with the outside world contributed to the attainment of sound economic position. Political forces could not give any particular orientation to the economic system because the history of this period was not politically coherent and except for the Kusanas, Kshatrapas and the Satvahanas, no other power had scope to follow an integrated policy.

4. A. D. 200 – 600 :–

The chief economic feature of this period is the rise of local units of production, partial feudalisation of land, and grant of cultivated lands to temples and Brahmanas. Number of tax paying people was dwindling and Fahien's assertion that "only those who till king's land pay land-tax" is an ample proof of it. The state maintained control over free peasants through imposition of taxes. Local officials were gradually assuming economic power and villagers were subjected to various kinds of contributions including forced labour. Even irrigation became a local responsibility and the Sudarsan lake was repaired by local governor. Guilds became more powerful, issued seals and coins and maintained their own militia known as *Srenibala*. Brihaspati goes to say that whatever is done by the heads of the guilds should be approved by the king and Narad also supports it. Guilds acted as independent units of production.

The striking feature of the period was the emergence of priestly landlords at the cost of local peasants. They were imposed from above on the local tribal peasants. In respect of landgrants, Madhya Pradesh grants differed from those of Bengal. Bengal grant were the results of sale transaction affected by individuals involving the transfer of land but the central Indian grants were made by the feudatories who gave away villages. The Bengal grants were made with the consent of the officials of the Central government and carried immunity from taxes only but the Central India grants provided administrative immunities as well. Large number of people paid taxes to Priests, Brahmanas, temples etc. and that also undermined the central authority. This led to creation of landed intermediaries who leased out lands to cultivators who were liable to penalties if they neglected cultivation. These cultivators were in the nature of temporary peasants.

In the realm of ownership, we come across a further development in the field of private landownership. There was gradual concentration of land in private hands. The peasants gradually came under the domination of these landowners and tenant farmers became completely dependent. Changes came with regard to the position of free cultivators. Lands changed hands with men working it. In one of the third century Pallava record, it is stated that the share croppers remained bound to the land after its transfer to the Brahmanas and similar accounts are found in the Vakataka records. Feudal economic pattern took shape.

Greater dependence on land became a reality. Villages were left to themselves as self sufficient economic units. Industries were organised under guilds which also carried on banking business. Banking operation was also undertaken by the temple committees. Till 550 A. D. India carried on some trade with eastern Roman Empire but by that time the people of the eastern Roman Empire had learnt from the Chinese the art of growing silk. This adversely affected the export trade of India and the Indian weavers gave up their occupation and took to other professions.

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From the Fourth to Seventh Century A.D., the period is remarkable for the diffusion of an advanced rural economy and formation of state system etc. The induction of Brahmanas through landgrants in tribal and forest areas brought new lands under cultivation and introduced better methods of agriculture based on improved knowledge of weather conditions. New regions came under the impact of feudal development. Land gifts created new rights and an officer called *Agraharika* had to be appointed to look after them.

In the post-Gupta period, the feudal practice of rewarding and paying officers with grants of lands seems to have begun under Harsha. We also see multiplication of states in the Transvindhyan region. Every state had a number of feudatory chieftains and each had its own armies and own taxation system. Every such state needed resources which could be obtained from its rural base. Enormous resources were provided by the peasantry and the nature of burden imposed on the agrarian community is more or less the same everywhere. The Rastrakutas derived large revenues from the major parts though the coastal trading was much less than that of the foreign trade which considerably declined. The merchants are described in the Pratihar inscriptions as *Vyavaharika*. Post-Gupta coins are few, debased and crude, pointing to economic decline. The Pallavas and the Cholas maintained active maritime trade with south-east Asia and from 9th Century onwards Indian merchants faced keen competition from the Arabs who monopolised at least the trade of Arabian sea. The decline of trade led to the decline of towns and stagnation began.

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CHAPTER—4

The Village System

Grama or village was the backbone of Indian rural economy in ancient India. It was the fundamental economic and social unit. It comprised a cluster of houses together with cultivated, fallow and pasture lands. Village as a human settlement was marked by the following features :—

1. *Vastu* (areas covered by houses)
2. *Chaitya* (sacred tress)
3. *Devagriha* (temples)
4. *Setubandha* (embankments)
5. *Smasan* (cremation ground)
6. *Sattra* (alms houses)
7. *Prapa* (Storage of drinking water)
8. *Punyasthan* (sacred spot)
9. *Preksa* (Hall of public amusement).

According to Kautilya, the land of the village was made up of the following parts--

- (i) *Kristha* (cultivated)
- (ii) *akristha* (uncultivated or waste)
- (iii) *Sthala* (high or dry ground)
- (iv) *Kedara* (field sown with crops)
- (v) *Arama* (grove)
- (vi) *Shanda* (Plantation of fruits)
- (vii) *Mulavapa* (field for growing roots like ginger, turmeric and like)
- viii) *Vata* (sugar plantation)
- ix) *Vana* (forests)
- x) *Pathi* (area covered by roads)
- xi) *Vivita* (grazing grounds)

Beyond the pasture land was the aranya or the uncultivated land which provided wood for the village. In this connection the

Buddhist account is similar to that presented by Panini. There were different types of villages like *gama*, *gamaka*, *dwaragama*, *Pachchantagama*, etc. India split up into numerous separate and distinct groups of holdings covering from about a few hundred to a few thousand acres. There were populous villages. Magadha, Kasi and Videha contained thousands of villages. Village settlements were located in well saturated plains or on the banks of rivers. The population ranged from thirty to one thousand families. It was not merely a territorial unit but an essentially human unit indicating a body of men connected by close ties with one another. The community was brought together by economic and social needs. Besides being a centre of peasants, it contained potter, blacksmith, carpenter, cobbler, washermen, sweeper, cattle-keeper, barber and men of various other professions all needed for the development of agricultural activities thus rounding off effectively its economic life. Newly constructed villages consisted of one hundred to five hundred families. The holdings in compact village forms were thus a necessity of permanent agricultural establishment. People organised themselves for mutual defence and village became an isolated self-sufficing unit and utilised as such for revenue purposes by the ruling authority.

According to *Prajnapanopanga*, *grama* was estate or a survey village which can pay eighteen kinds of survey taxes. *Grama* was used for an estate in official records and as a village or settlement in literary works. Vijayachandra in his *Abhidhanarajendra* defines *grama* as an estate paying eighteen kinds of government taxes or which is assessed separately for revenue purposes. *Grama* (as estate) comprised cultivated and fallow lands, as well as pastures, buildings, wells etc. and the area that constituted the territorial unit for the purpose of revenue administration.

The village community was one of the most important elements in the socio-economic pattern of ancient India. Each village had its limit fixed. It consisted of landowners, tenant farmers, slaves, hired workers and various other categories of people. The propertied class engaged labourers for cultivation. The lowest stratum in the village consisted of the exploited groups. These groups did not possess any means of production. The combination of the handicrafts and land cultivation created a system of barter in services between the members of the village communities. In internal affairs the village community was independent and it retained features of a close knit old time common traditions. Slaves, servants and hired workers had no political rights. Rural economy had its centre in the *grama* (village) having a collection of houses and families. Groves like *Veluvana* (Rajgir), *Anjanavana* (Saketa), *Jetavana* (Sravasti) etc. enhanced the beauty of the village settlements. There were provisions for gates, enclosures, fences and field watchmen. *Gopalka* was incharge of the flocks. Kautilya's scheme of village planning had also a place for sylvain retreats for the purposes of religious studies and practices.

Village organisation was also the result of a deliberate activity on the part of the state. Either by inducing the foreigners to immigrate or by causing the thickly populated area to send forth the excessive population, the king may construct villages either on new sites or on old ruins. Villages consisting of each of not less than hundred families and of not more than five hundred families of agricultural people or Sudra caste with boundaries extending as far as a *Krosa* or two and capable of protecting each other should be formed. As late as the thirteenth century A. D. we have an epigraphic evidence from south India an instance of the King taking the initiative in the formation of a village community. Sufficient land was purchased for the village site from the old title holders and these were transferred to the new settlers. Land was also provided for grazing cattle, for the maintenance of the families of new settlers and for the remuneration of village officers and artisans.

The villages were built in close juxtaposition to each other and the villages lying in the eastern direction became largely populated. Villages were regarded as seats of quiet, ordered and harmonious life. Cattle also found a comfortable centre. Large villages are also referred to. The village was an aggregation of families. India was pre-eminently a land of villages. The divergence in the village arrangement is ascribed to the fact that there were few tribes and clans compared with the vastness of the country. The king of Videha had a realm of sixteen thousand *Gamas* (villages). The villagers had common rights over jungles and pasture lands.

The village was also regarded as the smallest in the political fabric. In Kautilya's *Arthashastra* the villages are graded as those of first, middle and the lowest rank. Some villages were exempted from taxation, some supplied soldiers, some paid their taxes in the form of grain, cattle, gold and of raw materials; some supplied free labour and dairy produce in lieu of taxes. We have also references to the following types of villages :—

1. Mixed types of villages—where people of all castes and professions lived.

2. Industrial villages—such villages specialised in certain crafts.

3. Villages inhabited by the Brahmanas, who also carried on agricultural pursuits, Ksatriyas, Vaisyas, Chandalas, Nisadas and so on, park keepers, robbers, etc.

4. Border or frontier villages which were highly insecure or unsettled.

5. Villages inhabited by hunters, carpenters, smiths, potters, weavers, basket makers, fishermen, Dairymen, etc.

6. The economic factor of specialisation of labour was responsible for the localisation of various industries at separate villages and for the grouping of people of the same profession and caste.

Village contained different social strata

(i) cultivators of different status. peasants, tenants and farm-workers.

(ii) craftsmen, herdsmen, dependent cultivators, functionaries as non-productive groups.

The village as a community of life and production set the rules for their co-existence and interactions according to customary and legal norms. Kautilya discusses at length free producers. Villages were quite independent and there was social differentiation and dependence of peasants. Dependent cultivators were exploited by landlords and moneylenders, independent peasants by the king and his officers. This distinguishes the Indian feudalism from

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any other that the central power intervened in economic and political life of the village. Though the peasents possessed their means of production, they were collectively exploited. After the Mauryans, collective exploitation changed into individual exploitation. King transferred taxes and other prerogatives to the donee. Social differentiation led to the establishment of the caste system (creating the base of *Jajmanī* relationship) which gave a certain social stability to the village under the new conditions. Village artisan was constantly tied to several cultivators and received his wage as fixed share of harvest. Professional castes originate from the fifth century A. D. and that led to a decline in economic and technical progress, to parasitic use of economic surplus and social stagnation.

Populous villages are mentioned as towns by the Greek writers and one of them, Strabo, mentions five thousand cities (which were really villages). According to Diodoros, husbandmen live in the country parts and entirely avoid going into the towns. The *Dharmasutras* prescribe that a righteous man should live in villages where fuel, fodder and water are easily procurable. Villages where also provided with sufficient security from external dangers. Apastamba and Baudhayana criticise town life. The *Jatakas* refer to noble life in the village (III. 524). Bhasa also criticises town life. The *Epics* and the Sacred *Kural* emphasise the importance of the village.

To meet its pressing political necessities, the village also require its own humble political organisation. The village headman makes his appearance very early in the administrative history of India. But where the landowning body is composed of dominant class, village affairs were controlled by a council of Elders. Among the two leading types of villages, we have severalty or raiyatwari village having a headman to look after its affairs. It is this type of village we meet with in Manu and *Mahabharata* and it is perhaps the earliest organised form of agricultural village of India. Contrasted with this, there is the joint village where the affairs are not in the hands of a headman but a *Panchayat*. The dominant class have a body of tenant under them and the wasteland is the joint property of the whole village.

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The village organisation was not the spontaneous outcome of a particular set of social conditions but the part of the result of a deliberate activity on the part of the state. In the Vedic period the head of the Village was *Gramani* who was one of the *Ratnins* of the royal household. The post was an object of special ambition to the Vaisyas. The *Gramani* had a voice in the election of the King. It appears the villages during the period developed a sufficient amount of democratic life and decided their own affairs. Here rich and poor joined hands. In the post-Vedic period, the village headman was a very important personage. From the lawbooks, it appears that he was regularly appointed by the central government charged with the collection of village dues. He was the fiscal agent of the government. The villages managed their own affairs, built mote-halls, rest houses, reservoirs, roads and laid out parks. Even women took part in such affairs of public importance. There was a headman of each village, ten villages, hundred villages, and over a thousand villages. Persons violating compacts with village assemblies are to be banished from the realm. There was some sense of collective responsibility in the village life.

Kautilya clearly recognises the authority of the village headman. The headman had to work on behalf of the whole village and had at his disposal the assistance of the villagers whenever necessary. The village headman was known by different names like ***Gramika, Gamika, Gramakuta, Gramani, Gramaswamina, Karvatika, Muluda, Gamabhojaka*** etc. Though he was some times appointed by the State, his selection was also sometimes hereditary. His duties included maintenance of law and order, collection of royal dues, levying of fines, issuing prohibitions against slaughter of animals and sale of intoxicating drinks, helping the people in times of distress, and general control over the produce and property of the village. In the post-Mauryan period, the ***Grameyika Ayuttas*** (as subordinate to village headman), appear as important village officials. Village assemblies were known as ***Gosthi, Nikaya, Parishad, Samgha*** etc. State activities in village life were equally prominent.

The village administration employed a paid staff like ***Gramabhrtakas*** which included ***Kuttaka*** (carpenter), ***Karmara*** or

Ayaskara (blacksmith), potter, barber, washermen, *medaka* (digger of earth), *Rajuvtaka* (rope-maker), trainer of elephants, *asvadamaka* trainer of horses) etc. The village force was recruited from trappers (*vagurikas*), *sabaras* (*Bhils*) *Pulindas* (*Kiratas*), *chandalas*. forest dwellers (*aranyacharas*) besides various administrative staff of the village. The *Maymata* and *Manasara* classify villages into many categories on the basis of their size and holding. Small villages were the normal features. In the later period, the village chief is described as a country squire Ksemendra has drawn a vivid picture of a *gramadivira* (*Kayastha* or village accountant) who was expert in making false signature and inserting new entries. In Kashmir, a higher village officer was known as a *Niyogi* (revenue officer). He had power to appoint or dismiss a village *Kayastha*. He insulted and terrified villagers. In Kashmir, the *Damaras* were village lords.

Gamabhojaka :—The *Gamabhojaka* of the early period played a very prominent role in the rural economy of ancient India. He was a big man of opulence and position whose wrongs could not be held in check by any lesser authority than the King. He had powers to prohibit slaughter of animals within his area (*Jataka*—IV. 115). He is designated as an *amacha* (*amatya*) and is given a village for his enjoyment as remuneration for his office. It is impossible to ascertain beyond dispute whether he was king's nominee or elected by the rural constituency or whether he held a hereditary post. There is no positive evidence to show that he was the elected chief of the village community. He might have discharged certain vague and undefined functions as an intermediary between the king and the free holders. He is apparently the sole and final judge. The king's revenue is assigned to him by royal writ and fees, fines, bribes etc. are his perquisites. He could occasionally rise to the topmost rung of the economic ladder and constitute a plutocracy with the Brahmanas and the *Sethi* magnates. He had little to do with the communal life of the village and he owes no responsibility either to the king or to the village council for rural welfare. In the early period; the village chiefs were communal representatives and exerted a wholesome check on royal absolutism. Later with the rise of absolute monarchy they were transformed into king's officer and absorbed into an official heirarchy. *Gramikas* were subordinate to *Gopas* and *Sthanikas*. The *Gramikas* and *Bhojakas* are fitted into elaborate framework of civil administration. The *Bhojaka* had no proprietory rights over land. He is more an official than a popular personality and has little association with the democratic rural apparatus[1]

The public hall or *Sala* was the throbbing heart centre of the village organism and served manifold purposes. Bodhisattva as a boy collects subscription from the playmates and gets a hall built in the eastern suburbs of Mithila with special apartments for ordinary strangers, destitute men and women, stranger Buddhist monks and Brahmanas, foreign merchants and others. Such *Salas* were centered for stranded foreigners, and served as inns for travellers and for villagers these were centres of recreations.

The villagers were also closely knit together by economic bonds of diverse sorts and traces of collective farming are not wanting (*Jataka* II. 109; *AS*—II. 10). On the occasion of a sowing festival, the king held the plough along with peasants. The village formed a compact self centred unit. The King recognised the economic entity of a village. Vasistha characterises it as a corporate body and speaks of collective fine imposed on it (III. 4). The industrial villages show a closer bond and homogenity than the agricultural *gamas*. They were organised under a *Jethaka*. We have reference to fisherman's village. Smiths, village, hunters' village, carpenter village, saltmakers, village, basketmakers, villag. etc. The concentration of crafts and professions in fixed areas gave birth to a medley of castes and subcastes. The corporate activity tended to narrowness and exclusivism.

Members of the village community maintained their rights not only to personal freedom but also certain other rights and privileges. Grants of lands were made in the presence of whole local population including even those from the most humble castes. Special mention was made of the *Mahattaras* who appear to have included headman and scribe. The village headman was considerably rich. The village community was powerful organisation in the early medieval period and it played a vital part in the socio-economic and political life of south India. In the North, village communities appear to have been smaller in size and less influential. Each village had a council consisting of prominent members, was incharge of land and resolved all local disputes. In South India, the village territory could embrace the territory of a whole district (*Nadu*). These communities arranged their own administration and defence, mutual assistance amongst and peasants, building of irrigation facilities. Money for these activities was collected in the form of community dues. They lost their autonomy with the development of feudalism which also affected the autonomy of the towns. The feudal lords became autocrats.

CHAPTER-5

Land System

Ownership

The question of owership of land in ancient India and the difference of opinion on the land system as a whole has not been narrowed down even to the present day when so much research has been done on the subject. Every rival opinion on the question of ownership as a whole or the land system in general can be substantiated with quotations from the ancient texts and we have equally substantial material on the theory of individual, commual or royal ownership of land. One thing that we have to bear in mind here is this that not all parts of the country developed simultaneously. Here different cultures fused together and various units throve in isolation. A perusal of the conflicting sources reveals to us that all the three types, with local variations indeed, prevailed in this vast country.

Private or individual ownership

Ownership means *Svatva* of *Swamitva.* The distinction between possession and title is emphasised in Yajnavalkya (II.29) and Brhaspati (IX.2). The essential attribute associated with ownership is the right of trans- fer by sale, gift and mortgage. According to Manu (IX.44), the field belongs to him who first removes the weed as the deer to him who first shoots it. The rudimentary stage of loose ownership (in the sense of mine and thine) in seen in the *Aiteraya Brahmana.* According to *Milindapanha,* he who brings the land into use is called the owner of the land. Individual ownership is indicated in the case of Ambapali and Visakha Migaramata. A Brahamna of Magadh offers one thousand *Karisa* in gift. The *Jatakas* record the donation of parks by Jivaka at Rajgriha, by Ambapali at Vaisali and Anathapindaka at Sravasti. The judicial verdict in respect of Anathapindaka's suit against Jeta is an unmistakable evidence of individual ownership and the transfer of right by sale

The Pali canonical literature and the *Jatakas* reveal economy based chiefly on private ownership of land and the word *Gahapati* indicates a land-owner. The *Divyavadana* refers to individual peasants. Individual owners are are also mentioned in the *Suttanipata* and references to owners of fields are mentioned in the *Smrtis* and the *Mahabharat*. The grants of field by individuals are also indicative of idividual or private owsership in land. The elaborate rule on the sale of land shows that private ownership was legally recognised. According to Apastamba the landowner could let his land against a certain share of produce. The king was required to protect the property of others. Kautilya advises revenue collectors to maintain a proper account of the private lands for purposes o land revenue to the state. We have also variouss references to peasant proprietorship. Patanjali refers to the private ownership in arable lands. Kautilya clearly states that mere occupation of a boundary or any other property should not give a right of possession (III.16).

The law givers reveal to us the legal modes by which ownership could be established. Gautam, Manu and Brhaspati give five and seven modes of acquiring property or ownership (inheritance, purchase, partition, sicure, finding, conquest, lending interest per formance of work and acceptance of gift). Both title (*agama*) and enjoyment (*bhukti*) were essential requisites for ownership. Kautilya provides sufficient protection to individual landowner. Apart from the rich landowners, there were also poor owners of small plots of different categories. Property rights were protected and illega-appropriation of land was made subject to large fines. Intereference in the affairs of landowners was prohibited. Diodoros's statemen that no private individual is allowed to own land does not reflect the actual state of affairs and contradicts the *Dharmashastra Naradasmriti* contains a rule according to which the king was not allowed to violate the foundation of private ownership· The state made sure that the rules connected with the sale of land were observed and if violations did occur fines were levied.

Early epigraphic records give illuminating data on the issue. Usavadata purchased a plot of land from a private individual for presenting it to the Buddhist *Samgha*. His assignment of sixteen villages to the donees seems to imply only the assignment of revenues for assuring peaceful pursuits of spiritual avocations,—not the transfer of ownership or the right of alienation by sale, mortgage or gift. An early instance of private transfer is furnished by Dharmanandina who made a bequest of a field for the clothes of some ascetics living in one of the Nasik caves. In coure of time there grew up a tenancy system within the framework of private proprietorship. This was the natural result of the concentration of land and the rise of the big estates. A glimpse into the legal origin of individual ownership is afforded by the tradition embodied in the *Jatakas* (I. 153; IV. 262). Elsewhere Bodhisattvas is seen to form an estate outside his native village which indicates that alienation of land by sale, mortgage or otherwise was not unknown (III. 293) and that land had acquired a certain measure of fluidity. In the *Brhaspati Smriti*, attention is drawn to the fact that if the king were to take away privately owned land from the owner and donate it to another, he would be acting against the law.

Communal Ownership

The tradition of communal ownership of land is very old and it seems to have been associated with the Uttarakurus. It is evident from the *Mahabharat* that these people were pious. Vaisampayan makes mention of the Kuru land in the palmy days of Dusyanta. According to *Dighanikay* (XXXII. 7) they called no goods their own, no women their chattels, and their crops were yielded without toil. In one or the *Jutakas*, there is a reference to common village property (II.109). The pasture land (*Vraja*) around the *Gamakhetta* was enjoyed and owned by the villagers in common. The *Sakyas* and the *Kaliyas* cultivated their tribal land held in common enterprise. The actual labour was done by the slaves. Land was held in common between the *Rajakulas*. Strabo also refers to the fact that the land was cultivated by the families in common and when crops were collected each took a load for his support throughout the year. It appears from the *Arthashastra* that communal ownership was obviously on the wane.

Communal ownership may be defined as the ownership of land in which the villagers have got no notion of a divided or undivided right, all cooperate in tilling and raising the crops and storing the same at a common granary. There is no trace of communal property in the Vedic literature in the sense of ownership by the Community, nor is there any mention of communal cultivation. communal ownership should not be confused with joint ownership. The system of communal ownership was probably prevalent among the republics. The pasture lands in villages were held in common. Both Kautilya and Manu urge upon the king to make special provision for common pasturage. Manu and Visnu hold that pasture grounds are indivisible. The village community exercised their communal rites in uncultivable waste and pasture lands. A Gwalior inscription of the 9th century A. D. (*EI*-I.20) records a grant of plots of land specified as belonging to village and it is evident from this source that corporate person is the legal owner here. Communal ownership had its lingering traces in some parts of the country. Kautilya refers to corporate ownership of land in connection with colonisation (*AS*-VII. II).

The whole theory of communal ownership is built upon the basis of a reference by the Greek writers and is believed to be a survival of the primitive village system. According to Nearchos, various groups cultivate land in common in the North-West on the basis of kinship. Hopkins holds that joint family with its original common ownership of land testifies to all such traces. The theory of communal ownership of land had a very limited applicability in ancient India. We learn from the *Jatakas* that the belt of meadow land around the *Gamakhetta* and the uncleared waste and woodland were enjoyed by the villagers in common (I.1943 317; II.358; III. 130 ff; 149; IV.359; V.103). Cooperative spirit is evident from the *Arthashastra* but that should not be confused with communal ownership and it would not be proper to assert at this stage of our knowledge that there was communal ownership of cultivable land in villages. Even in the North-West there were tribal joint villages. Communal ownership survived side by side with private ownership though in a modified form.

Royal or State Ownership

A royalist school of lawyers and theorists in the beginning asserted and propounded the theory of royal ownership of land in ancient India. King's title to ownership appears to have been identified with communal title of *Vis*. With the growth of royal power in the later Vedic period, the king appears to have developed certain prerogatives over the soil. It is clear from the *Mahabharat* that king is the owner of all wealth except that of Brahmanas. Dasrath claims in the *Ramayan* that all property except those belonging to the Brahmanas, is his and that he can confiscate anybody's wealth. All these generated a tendency to reduce public lands to king's private estates and Megasthenes added a new feather to this theory by stating that all India is the property of the crown and no private person is permitted to own land. Kautilya was a supporter of strong monarchy and he encouraged royalty in gaining control over state activities in all walks of life. The *Dighanikaya* (XXVII.21) asserts that the king is entitled to half of ancient hoards and metals by reason of giving protection to and of being the master of the land.

Bhattaswami declares king as the owner of both land and water. King exercised overriding authority and confiscated land (*AS*—I. 14). Royal pretensions to ownership was never disputed even though it was not accepted in general. Manu holds that land given by the king could not be alienated. According to Brhaspati, king could transfer land from one individual to another only in certain circumstances although such steps should not be taken to override a justified title. Immovable property, held for three generations, could not be alienated without king's sanction according to Narada. When disputes about land are not settled and when ownership has been lost such lands revert to the Crown. According to kautilya the king is entitled to a toll on every occasion of sale of a holding by public auction.

Direct and indirect references in the literary sources about the royal or state ownership of land are at times confusing and conflicting. Strabo holds—. "The whole of the country is of royal ownership and the farmers cultivate it for a rental in addition to paying a fourth part of the produce". Both Diodoros and Strabo agree, in content, to the theory of royal ownership. Arrian says

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nothing specific about ownership. Both royal and private ownership is mentioned in the Kharosthi documents of Chinese Turkestan. Bhattaswami's reference also indicates only the king's right of theoritical overlordship. On the basis of Medhatithi, Buhler came to the conclusion that king was the owner of all land. The epic and *Smriti* verses refer more to the growth of royal authority than the actual ultimate ownership. People paid taxes to the state as a price for protection. The sovereign claimed rent from the Crown lands and the cultivators were his tenants. Jaimini, in his *Mimamsasutra*, suggests that the emperor cannot make gift of the whole land for the earth is common to all. K. P. Jaiswal absolutely denies the right of state ownership. Savaraswami, the commentator of Jaimini, holds that others have as much right over the earth as the emperor.

In view of the conflicting evidences regarding the royal ownership of land, we have to take into consideration the other side of the medal also. The growth of royal power under the Mauryas helped them to bring a large unclaimed area of land under the authority of the Crown. The continued tradition of monarchy enabled the monarchical states of North and South India to retain direct control over most part of the newly acquired land. The king had a vast stretch of fallow and uncultivable land under his control. We have a large number of records of royal donations in which the donees enjoyed the revenues accruing from such grants but they could not challenge the prerogative rights of the Crown. The state had the absolute right of exchange of grant of villages under its control. In this background we can suggest that Diodoros and Strabo refer to the Crown lands only which are also mentioned in the *Arthashastra*.

The Superintendent of agriculture was responsible for their cultivation by slaves, labourers, prisoners and others on specified shares in the produce and we have such references in the *Mahavastu*. The Nasik inscription of Gautamiputra Satkarni records the donation of a royal field in a certain village to the Buddhists. His another record mentions a grant of hundred *nivartanas* of crown land from the royal village. State *demesnes* are also mentioned in the *Jatakas*. State control over unoccupied wasteland is undisputed.

and so were the grazing grounds. Timber and elephant forests could be exploited only by the State. The ownerless property belonged to the state which claimed ownership of treasure troves also. Mine was a state monopoly and so was the case with salt (*EI*. VI. 84 ff; 315; VII. 67-74). The theory of king's ownership of land was not altogether unknown in ancient India.

The issue is very controversial and it is very difficult to arrive any definite conclusion. According to M.H. Gopal, it was a sort of perpetual lease held on annual performance of an obligation. He agrees with F.W. Thomas that the king was the proprietor of land in so far as he was entitled to revenue and could replace the defaulting cultivator from his holding. Gopal believes that the basis of the land system was a sort of tenancy under the Crown. Neither the theory of private property in land was held inviolable and that all pretensions of the Crown to such right was denied nor the supposition that the king was the owner of tho soil in the sense that he was entitled to a tithe on produce. The conception of a more extended royal right is in evidence in many quarters.

Medhatithi explains Manu (VIII.39) in that manner and Megasthenes, Fahien and Hiuentsang seem to have been impressed by the prevalence of the royalist theory. King's title was given a wider meaning. R.G. Basak holds that there was a gradual advance from popular ownership of earlier days to royal ownership in later times. We have the assertion of a royal claim as early as the *Brahmanas* and Pali canon and in a more outspoken manner in the *Shantiparva* and the *Arthashastra*. N.C. Banerji suggests that in the days of small states, mines and forests belonged to nobody but when these were conquered by the Magadhan king all intervening territories in addition to forsets and other unclaimable natural sources passed to the dominion of the conqueror. The growth of empire hastened the conversion of mines and forests into royal domains.

It can be suggested that the king was in absolute ownership of a large part of the soil and partially titular owner over others. Peasant freeholders were also there enjoying hereditary rights but the recipients of royal lands except those of a *Bramadeya* had limited title over his plot. According to Kautilya, pastures, plains and forests are not subject to individual ownership (*AS*—III.10) and so was the case with the places of pilgrimages according to Usanasa. With the rise of territorial monarchy, tribal land was converted to king's land These lands were the mainstay of the treasury. We have seen above that the virgin and unclaimed lands were king's property (*AS*—III.I). The *Brahmadeya* lands were exempted from taxes and fines. Crownlands consisted of the homestead and cultivated lands reverting to Crown by various processes, unoccupied waste, both fallow and cultivable, recovered for settlement or colonisation, reserved forests, mines including salt centres which were government monopoly, treasure troves and water. The king had large tracts directly under his ownership from which he made charitable or religious bequests.

The queen consort or the queen mother also had their own estates out of which gifts or assignments of revenue could be made (*M.P.E.*—IV). The *Nanaghat Cave Inscription* of Naganika (first century B.C.), the *Nasik* and *Karle Budhist Cave Inscriptions* of Usavadata (second century A.D.), the *Nasik and Karle Buddhist Cave Inscription* of Gautamiputra Satkarni, the *Nasik and Karle Buddhist Cave Inscriptions* of Vasisthaputra Sri Pulumavi (second century A.D.), *Hathigumpha inscription* of Kharavela's chief queen, the *Mayidavolu inscription of* Simhavarmana (third century A.D.), the *Hirahadgalli inscription* of Sivaskandavarmana (fourth century A.D.) and various other inscriptions of south India are the records of royal donations. They enjoyed revenues accruing from such grants but the could not question the prerogative right of the Crown. Jolly and Shamashastri have rendered *Svabhumi* of Kautilya as Crown lands or royal domains.

Besides these prevalent theories of ownership of land, we have references to impartible real estate. The peasant proprietorship was not the uniform or the universal principle of land tenure. Gautama, Manu and Usanas are very reticent about the partibility of land but the later lawgivers recognise land to be partible. In the *Mahabharat*, evils of partition have been decried. The peasant free holder enjoyed his patrimony subject to an elastic royal right of intefrence which did not go unresented.

In the age of Buddha, rural economy was based chiefly on a system of village communities of landowners. There were isolated large estates side by side with small decaying farms. We have references to Brahmana Kasi Bhardwaj working in his extensive field with five hundred ploughs and Bodhisattva working in one thousand *Karisas* in Magadh. There was a landholder with a wealth of eight hundred millions. Big farmers are known as *Gahapatis* and a Brahman *Gahapati* appears as owner known of eight hundred millions. There was inequality in economic sphere all around.

Whereas Usavadata's Grant does not give right of alienation, the charter of Vasisthaputra is marked by three characteristics—

(i) the village is assigned to be owned by the *Bhiksus* dwelling in the caves to produce a perpetual rent for the care of the caves ;

(ii) with customary immunities belonging to monks, land was free from the royal officers and police, that is, from revenue and fines and from the royal monopoly of salt;

(iii) the king's right to abrogate the grant substituting another in its stead is implicit.

Gautamiputra Satkarni assigns a field of two hundred *nivartanas* to the ascetics in a village with exactly the same immunities as above—in the former case it is the gift of a whole village and in latter only a *khetta*. Another inscription of Gautamiputra directs that since a field granted was not cultivated, hundred *nivartanas* of land from the same be given to the ascetics with customary immunities and the field is explicitly characterised as a royal field (*rajakamakhetta*). Possibly, only the revenue of the Crown lands was assigned but since the village was depopulated and field untilled, the king assigned a portion thereof with complete rights of a beneficiary and usufructuary.

It was only a matter of transfer of revenue over which the king had undivided legal right. The assignment is only of the revenue when whole villages are disposed of along with the tillers and their holdings and of ownership and usufruct when the gifts consist of a few acres of land. *Brahmadeya* could be made only of crownlands.

Monarchy sought to limit the rights of the property owners. The king levied taxes on the lands of private persons and naturally he kept a careful check on the conditions of land. If an individual abandoned his plot at sowing or at harvest time, the king could exact a fine from him. The state also exacted fines from those who failed to pay their taxes. The state did not have the right to confiscate land from the private owners. While the state maintained its control over land resources, the village communities attempted to hinder the extension of private ownership, which, however, could not be checked. The village community protected the landowners. Only part of country's land consisted of State lands and king's personal possessions. Within the king's territorial possession existed the royal estate or the *Sita*. It was out of his possession that he could donate, sell or lease them out. *Sita* was levied on King's land and *Bhaga* was tax on private estates.

The question about the ownership of land is an intriguing one and no last word can be said in the present state of our knowledge. The evidences of Manu and Vasistha are in favour of private ownership and they are supported by *Brhaspati* and the *Agnipurana*. Kautilya's reference to the entire question of ownership of land is not indicative of any specific nature. Jaiswal's reading of Bhattaswami's *commentary* has been corrected by U. N. Ghoshal in the light of *Manasollasa* and he has suggested king's right of property in the soil. Evidences are equally strong both in favour of and against the theory of royal ownership. A recent East German study on Kautilya contains two scientific dissertation.—

(i) First part deals with the village community in which it has been suggested that the land titles of the villages and cultivators were different and co-existent, different also according to regions whether it was (a) royal core land, (b) land reclaimed or settled by government initiative or support, and (c) crownland-arable land in traditional village communities was divided into field plots in permanent or individual use of cultivators while the rest were common. Cultivators' right to disposition was strictly limited. Sales were restricted, controlled and did not transfer full ownership rights. Title holders on land were not at all equal but differed in social and legal status.

(ii) This study holds the view that the private land property did not exist. Village was the ultimate owner regarding land and direct owner regarding irrigational faclities.

(iii) The king allocated land to his officers and later these owners might have consolidated their possession while the central authority declined and thus possibly laying the foundation of future feudalism. Crown land is seen here as a singular royal plot spread over village lands. This might have contributed to change the relations between hitherto closed village and the centre and the emerging national economy. An ultimate ownership by King cannot be proved. (Cf.—Ritschi, Era and Maria Schietetich—*Studien Zum Kautilya Arthasastra.*, 9, East Berlin; pp.392; 1973). It has been held here that the *Jajamani* relation regulated the position of every village and the actual origin of the caste system are traced to this period—slaves, untouchables and a variety of castes. The finding is not open and above board and needs further investigation in the light suggested by the scholar.

Nature

The state control of the agrarian economy of the Mauryan period did not last for more than a century and in the post-Mauryan period state efforts seem to have been replaced by individual efforts. The investment of physical labour in a piece of uncultivated property was supposed to confer on the individual the title as is evident from Manu and *Milindapanha.* The *Divyavadana* refers to individual farmers.

In the Satvahan period, we have no records of sale and purchase of lands for secular purposes and this seems to have limited the scope of individual ownership. The merchants and others could dispose of their lands only for religious purposes. The state ownership is evident from the Satvahan Grants. The earliest epigraphic evidence of land grant belongs to the First Century B. C. The administrative rights were first abandoned by Gautamiputra Satkarni in the second century A.D. They appear to have retained some control over the donated land in one form or the other.

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The Kusanas introduced the *aksayanivi* system of land tenure and this tenure became more popular uuder the Guptas. The partial feudalisation of land system began in the Gupta period when the ruler gave up his control almost over all sources of revenue and even royal ownership of mines seems to have been transferred to the brahmanas. The people were even asked to obey donee's command. In the grant of Pravarasena II, the object is not to secure the support of the priests but to prevent them from acting in opposition. According to Fahien, King's attendants, guards and retainers received emoluments, the nature of which is yet not very clear. The process of grants and partition of lands contributed to fragmentation. Manu and Yajnavalkya never refer to partition of landed property which is mentioned for the first time in Narada and Brhaspati. The brahmanas got their lands cultivated by temporary peasants and the donees even replaced peasants by new ones.

In the organisation of land economy, Yajnavalkya introduces three stages—*Mahipati* (king), *Ksetraswami* (landowner) and *Karsaka* (cultivator) and that is roughly corroborated by Brhaspati who makes it clear that *Swami* formed an intermediate stage between the *Raja* and the actual tiller of the soil. They did provide some sort of economic basis for the rise of feudalism. Local officials were assuming economic powers. There was depreciation in the position of free peasants. Feudatories became more popular and it was not essential for them to seek consent of their overlords while making grants. In the post-Gupta period temples and monasteries emerged as important recipients of grants and instances of the same are there in the contemporary inscriptions. Power and influence of temples and monasteries grew and these came to account for a substantial area of land. These institutions developed as semi-independent political pockets. These institutions got their lands cultivated by temporary peasants and tenants and they had not to pay any revenue to the State. The temporary peasants on these lands were like semi-serfs or temporary tenants. Appreciable number of landed intermediaries emerged on the scene who functioned as collector of land tax. Government officials were remunerated in assignments of land revenues. It introduced an important feudal element in the land system of ancient India.

In the post-Gupta and early medieval period, land was regarded by many as a social trust. The state did not allow an owner to waste this valuable gift of nature. Kautilya recommended confiscation of land from those who did not care to cultivate and such instances are not unknown in ancient India. When the disturbed political situation led to the shrinkage of trade and opportunities of livelihood, a considerable number of persons fell back on land and the result was the increasing pressure on land.

The issue of the ultimate ownership of land appears to have become complicated as a result of the immense complexity of the situation. The medieval authorities conceived of multiplicity of rights and of property qualitatively subdivisible, that is, the *Svatva* of kings, landowners, tenants or tenant farmers and even of the mortgagee (*BSOAS*. XVIII. 481 ff). Vijnaneswara formulated the doctrine of *Laukikasvatvavada*, that is, the property has its basis on popular recognition without any dependence on the *Sastras*. There was property of hundred various kinds in land. Some verses in the *Upamitibhavaprapanchakatha* suggest that the superiormost rights over land was deemed to have been vested in the supreme overlord. The conditions differed from kingdom to kingdom in the middle ages. Big peasant proprietors were making their way into the ranks of ruling aristocracy and smaller ones were being reduced to poverty by oppression and overtaxation. The prosperous cultivators became *Damaras* in Kashmir. The *Commentary* of Haradatta on Gautama envisages a situation in which fear might prevent a weak person from asserting the right of ownership over his property against the powerful individuals (Gautama-II. 3.35). It reflects the condition under which the peasants lost their rights. This led to the growing poverty of the common mass of peasantry. The increased claims of kings and ruling landed aristocracies curtailed and obliterated even the traces of communal and collective ownership of land.

The evidences at our disposal suggest that all land certainly never belonged entirely to the state or to the crown. Epigraphic evidences from different parts of the country are there to show that not only kings, queens and lords but also private persons made gifts of various kinds in land to various persons. The queen mother Gotami Balasri's grandson granted a village to the monks on mount Trirasmi. This is a case of the transfer of royal land for the village is clearly called royal property. There was a clear cut distinction between lands which belonged to a king and the common people. A distinction between state and private property was not only well known but fully recognised and admitted. Till the seventh century A. D. either untilled or building land, which was the state property, was sold by it in accordence with the prevalent system of sale (after all formalities were settled) to private individuals with all the rights thereof in perpetuity and not for a limited time as is evident from the Damodarpur Copperplate inscriptions dated G. E. 124 (443-44 A. D.). The transfer of property was known.

A recent study (by Barrie M. Morrison, Delhi-1980) has shown that there are four principal grants relating to the transfer of landed property in ancient Bengal—

(i) the first group comprises transfers of smaller areas of waste and homestead land that have been purchased from the local authorities for the purpose of making the bequest—the recipients are expected to bring them under cultivation; these grants have been issued on the authority of the local district official and the only condition which is imposed upon the gift is found in the term *Nividharmu* or *Aksavanivi.*

(ii) it is apparent that the persons holding a variety of positions in society purchased lands to give to religious establishments of persons—a king or chieftain (*maharaj*), a district official (*visayapati*), a city mayor (*nagarasresthin*), a noble man (*kulaputraka*), a district trade officer (*visaya-vyapar*), an agent (*sadhanika*), priests (*brahmanas*), writers or clerks (*kayasthas*), record keepers (*pustapala*), leading men (*kulikas*), and headman (*kutumbina*) all of whom held position in local society. The purchase of wasteland for the purpose of making a religious endowment was practised by individuals of different social positions.

(iii) grants by rulers and governors mostly to the religious instutions or to Brahmanas for religious merit. The land which was not under cultivation when it was transferred was given as *agrahara* land, which means that it was to be held free from all taxes and other liabilities in perpetuity as a religious endowment. A number of plates issued by the rulers indicate that the property is to be held free from revenue demands while this qualification of the property transfer does not occur in the grants issued under the seal of the district administration.

(iv) Plates granted by the dynasties—person donating is also the authority who issues the copperplate. When the major dynasties became established the practice of making religious endowments free from all taxes, services and other liabilities was concentrated into the hands of these dynasties and here we have the manifestation of a tendency to centralise the political administration. Many of the pala grants specify that land being given was held by the king personally and had not yet been alienated and this may mean that the royal family held extensive private property rights.

(v) There were four types of transfer—(a) land purchases were authorised by the local administration (5th to 7th centuries);
(b) property transfer requested by some highly placed royal officials which were agreed to by the ruler (6th to 9th centuries);
(c) royal donations of the major dynasties (10th to 12th centuries);
(d) varied thirteenth century grants.

II

Land Grants & Land Legislation

Various types of land grants are known to us from different sources. These grants were made to (i) Brahmanas, (ii) Buddhist *Samghas*, (iii) state officials, (iv) members of royal family, (v) villages which supplied troops, (vi) Crown officers of public charities and various others. As a result of these gifts the Brahmanas and the Buddhist *Samghas* and temples grew rich and wealthy. The motive behind these grants was to earn religious merit. Grants were also made to state officials in lieu of their services rendered to the state. According to Kautilya, superintendents should be endowed with land and so also the *spies*. *Mahavastu* refers to *Senapatigram*, which was a royal grant in lieu of services. The system of grant to the members of the royal family was also a regular feature. Kautilya refers to *Ayudhiya* and *Atithya*. There were both royal and private grants of all types. Grant was also made as a mark of royal favour. Women also made land grants but Narada lays down that the transactions of women (gifts and sale) should be considered invalid. The announcement of royal grants was made to the officers to avert any kind of interference. Accounts of land grants were maintained by the State.

No sale was considered complete without the presence of villagers. The full description and exact boundaries were to be publicly announced. Sale by bidding was also known. Transactions settled in secret were declared null and void. The maximum period to annul the sale of land was ten days. Illegal land sales were reje-ected. Widows in the *Mahabharat* were not empowered to dispose of inherited property. Visnu and Yajnavalkya forbid her to sell, mortgage or give that away. Lands granted to the state officials could not be sold by them and the Brahmanas were forbidden to dispose of *Brahmadeya* lands to non-Brahmanas as is evident from the *Arthashastra*. The Brahmanas taking up the profession of a *Vaisya* were prohibited from selling their land. Taxable lands were not to be alienated to persons who were tax-free. All types of land sale were registered in state records in the Mauryan period.

It is difficult to ascertain the exact kind of legal relationship between the individual proprietor and the sovereign. The expression *Gramakama* in later Vedic texts points to sovereign's prerogative. The landgrants created landlords and depressed the position of the actual cultivators who were turned into tenants or semi-serfs. We come across peasant proprietors in the Buddhist period. There was a tendency towards centralisation under the Mauryas. In the face of conflicting reports and evidences, it is not possible to arrive at any particular conclusion regarding the legal position of the king in respect of land system and even with regard to land legislation and grant there is a difference of opinion among ancient writers and legislators. The epigraphic records, though reliable to a great extent, are also conflicting. These records do not speak about the relation between the tenant and his immediate landlord.

The landgrants delegate the donees some prerogatives over these matters. They could settle tenants or eject them. The Bengal records are important in this connection. The *Baigram Copperplate* (447-48) records the sale of land. The persons approached by the intending purchasers were the chief householders of the villages concerned, who as interested in the village affairs were addressed by would be buyers of the land. It hints at some type of village organisation in which the voice of the chief householders was supreme The *Damodarpur plate inscription* No. 2 speaks of the *Mahattaras* (leading men), *Astakuladhikarana* (eight notable persons), *gramikas* (village heads) and *kutumbis* (householders) of the village being addressed by a villageman for the sale of land. It appears that there was some sort of village organisation for the transaction of such sort of business. The same information regarding the sale of land is available to us from the *Dhanaida Copperplate Inscription.*

A cultivator and a *mahattara* are mentioned in a Vallabhi grant of Dharasena II (571-72). In the *Ghughrati plate* of Samacharadeva, the following facts are recorded regarding the sale transaction of land. There were headmen of the districts or localities (*visayamahattara)*, the men of experience (*vyavahar)* of the village who had a say in the village affairs. These represented the villagers and transacted the ordinary civil and criminal affairs of the village. This plate records the decision in the following manner :

> "Let it be given to this Brahmana, and having recognised (that is, constituted) the *Karanikas* Nayanaga, Kesava and others as the representatives of the public *(Kulavarana)* granted away by a copper plate in possession of this Supratiksaswami"....

The villagers had their say through their accredited representatives. The village landlords, the headman and *Mahattaras* are also mentioned in the *Surat grant* of Karakaraja (A. D. 821)......who are notified regarding the grant of a piece of land. Mahipala, while granting a village to a Brahmana, notified his subordinates and his villagemen which included *Mahattamas* (elders) and *Kutumbis* (cultivators or householders) and the same is mentioned in a grant of Madanapaldeva. By the thirteenth century A.D. the process of granting immunities had gone too faras is evident from the *Panachobh Copperplate* of Samgramagupta. The three officers, *Mahadanika*, *Mahasresthidanika* and *Bhulidanika* were concerned with endowments or grants. The nature of these endowments could not be different from the grants of villages which carried economic and administrative independence. The opinion of the officials in the *Panchobh Copperplate* counted much since the charter begins by seeking the consent of his officers by means of the phrase *matamastu*.

In South India, land granted to the village assembly was recorded and the assembly caused this transactions to be inscribed on the stone wall. Such records are frequent in South India. One such record says ––

"at the command of the members of the great assembly which included great men of the Wards' Committees, the greatmen of the Garden Committee, the greatmen of the field committee, the greatmen of the north fields, the *Bhattas* and other distinguished (*visista*) men of this year.........the greatmen of the tank committee......... received one hundred and twenty *Kalanju* weight of gold of one mine and a half degrees of fines........."

Inscriptions refer to village committee, town committee and various such other bodies connected with land legislation. Whereas *Gramakuta, Mahattaras, Gramikas, Kutumbis, Mahattama, Panchakula, Maheswaras, Astakuladhikarana, Mahaganastha* etc. mattered in village assembly, *nagarasrethi, prathamakulika, prathamasarthavaha, prathamakayastha* etc. mattered in the town assembly.

III

Land Survey & Measurement

Some sort of cadastral survey was known in ancient India. Panini refers to officers called *ksetrakara* who divided the cultivable lands into plots by survey and measurement and fixed their area. Kautilya refers to a detailed survey of land which furnished an adequate data of productive capacity of the people. Boundaries and locations of villages were clearly marked and defined and we learn from the *Junnar Buddhist Cave Inscription* that the donated field was delimited. Such demarcations and delimitations are indicated in a large number of inscriptions. Village boundary was indicated by river, mountain, forest, cave, artificial buildings, temples, trees etc. and rules framed by lawgivers were fairly applied. The various marks facilitated the survey work. Violation of boundaries or marks was severely dealt with. Kautilya and Manu have prescribed fines. Penalities for the violation of boundary marks are also prescribed in the *Visnusmrti*, *Yajnavalkyasmriti* and the *Mahabharat*. Land disputes appear to have been quite common and these were settled by various authorities. The total village area was ascertained by means of inspection of village accounts and records maintained by the *Gopas* and the *Sthanikas*. The survey work was undertaken by the officials like *Rajakammika*, *Rajjuka*, *Rajjugahaka-Ammacca*. who is shown busy measuring the fields (*Jataka* II.376). From the *Jataka* accounts it is clear that the state surveyors had genuine anxiety for accurate survey of land. Asoka asked *Rajjukas* to discharge their duties confidently and fearlessly (RE. II; PE—IV and VII.)

Land survey and measurements were certainly known and practised. Such operations were undertaken by means of a measuring rod (*dandaka*) to which was tied a rope to assist in the measurement of land. The surveyors (*Rajjugahaka-amacca*) must have encountered difficulties in carrying on their duties. Panini's *Ksetrakara* demarcated cultivable areas into fields by actual survey and measurement. According to Megasthenes great officers of the state measured the land. In the *Jatakas* we come across the linear measures like *Karisa* and *Rajju*. Kautilya mentions a list of the following linear measures: *viz.*, *Kamsa*, *angula*, *danda*, *rajju*, *aratni*, *dhanus*, *goruta* etc. He also mentions *paridesa*, *bahu*, *vitasti*, *chhaya-purusa*, *yojana*, as measures.

Rajju, *Danda* and *Nivartana* continued to be current even after Kautilya. Another known measures are *pada* (*padavarta*), *Kulavapya*, nala (*nalika*) etc. According to Kautilya, one *nivartana* was equal to three *rajjus*. The linear measurement became current in the north as well as in the south. It was also current among the western Chalukyas but another linear measure known from the western Chalukya records in *Rajamana*, the exact length of which cannot be made out. *Nivartana* was also in vogue under the Kadambas and Rastrakutas and also in Bihar till recently (known in local dialect as *Netana)* (*Cf-EI* X. 102-6; XI.280; XX.108). The length and breadth of a *nivartana* varied with time and locality.

Mattar was also current under the western Chalukyas. *Padavarta* was used in Gujerat and Saurastra. *Bhumi* was another measure in measuring land and the word has been utilized in the *Satpatha Brahmana* and is also mentioned in the inscription of Pravarasena II. *Nala* of the epigraphs was no other than the abbreviated form of *Nalika* of Kautilya. It is also mentioned in the *Panchatantra* and the *Bhagawata* and in the *Damodarpur Copperplate* and also in the *Barrackpur Grant* of Vijayasena. *Hasta* was another form of measurement and is mentioned in Kautilya, Junagadh Inscription of Rudradaman (A. D. 150-52) and in various other Bengal grants. *Kulavapya* as a unit of measurement may be traced to early times. Kalidas has used this system as a simile in describing Raghu's conquest of the vangas (*Raghuvamsa*. IV.37). According to Hoernle it implied so much land as is usually sown with a Kulya of seed. *Kulavopya* may mean an area of land on which one *kulya* of seed could be grown. It is mentioned in Gupta inscription. *Dronavapa* was another unit of measurement (*EI*. XX. 63). *Hala* was another unit or measurement. It is explained as area cultivated by one *hala* and the multiples of *hala* (plough). In one of the Prakrit Inscriptions hundreds of thousands of ploughs of land were granted (*EI*. XX. 18) and a similar account is found in the Pallava record. Ploughs varied in size and capacity from place to place.

The royal surveyors made use of the measures for accurate measurement of land. Even atoms and particles were also used as measures. It is interesting to note that there is a remarkable correspondence between the ancient Indian measures of length and the Babylonian measures. India developed its own measures of length and breadth. *Nivartana* has been taken as equal to an English acre, five acres, an area sufficient to support a man from its produce, as one and half acres and was the same as the *Nivattama* of the Jaina text. *Bhiksuhala* denoted the property of the monks. *Kula* was elmost the same as *Dohalika* of the landgrants.

According to *Danamayukha* a donor should give a *grama* (estate) to a Brahmana but if he is not in a position to do this he may give land measuring a *Gocharma* (the area of land whereupon a hundred cows and an ox can sit easily or the produce of which is sufficient to support a Brahmana for a year). According to Baudhayan, a portion of land measuring six *nivartanas* should be kept free from taxes on the ground that this much is necessary to support a family. Large varieties of measures were in vogue in ancient India and some differed from state to state. States, in different parts, might have some standard measures. According to Strabo, the city magistrate looked after measures of all kinds.

IV

Land Tenure

It is on the basis of the different systems of ownership that we can tentatively say something about the structure of land tenure. Opinion is largely divided on this issue and even scholars having common ideology donot have uniformity of views and outlook on this issue. The existence of a class of landed intermediaries is an established fact. Various types of tenures existed under the Mauryas but after the decline of the Mauryas, frequent invasions in the north enabled the conquerors to consider land as transferble. Since the state had both direct and indirect rights, numerous systems of land tenure was inevitable.

The *Brahmadeya* type of tenure was granted to those who performed sacrifices (*rtvika*), spiritual guides (*acharya*), priests(*Purohita*). and those learned in the Vedas (*srotriya*). Such lands were exempted from the payment of taxes and fines (*adandakarani*). According to Kautilya, Brahmanas could not alienate such lands by sale or mortgage to the members of other castes (*AS*-III.10). The privileges were exclusively confined to their caste community. Even the early epigraphic records completely deny the Brahmana grantees the right of proprietorship and the right of sale, gift or transfer. The system of collective grants to Brahmanas was not unknown. Landgrants were also made to the association of Brahmanas. The Brahmana grantees are also shown as *bhojakas* which conveys the sense of enjoyment. The tenants already working on such royal lands were not dispossessed. The Hirahadagulli Inscription of Siraskandavarmana records that the grant was donated along with the labourers working on half of the produce and Koli tribe slaves.

The *Dighanikay* does not refer to any exemption in the Brahmadeya lands. In later times, the state relinquished certain administrative facilities in favour of the grantees and officers were prohibited from interfering with such grants. They had nothing to pay to the state in shape of taxes. *Brahmadeya* lands were adequately productive, yielding sufficient produce and were exempted from all types of payment. There was *Brahmadeya tribhogadharma* intended for the welfare of the Brahmanas, the deity and the king [*Devadaya Brahmadaya* and *Variyam.*]

The Brahmanas were assigned *Agrahara* villages. In the *khoh Copperplate* of Maharaj Hastina, *Agrahara* was granted as a gift to certain Brahmanas. Such gifts were marked by exemptions from taxes like *Udranga* and *Uparikara*, non-interference from the entry of troops, remission of all taxes and tribute that might accrue. The donees were entitled to the tribute of customary royalties, taxes of Gold etc. and their orders within the village were to be obeyed. The gift was permanent and irrevocable (*CII*-Nos. 22; 29). In actual practice from fifth century A.D. onwards such lands could be transferred although it was declared permanent and irrevocable.

The second kind of tenure, besides *Brahmadeya* and *Agrahara* was one given to officials (superintendents, accountants, veterinary doctors and messangers) but even in these cases they had not the right to alienate the land. *Atithya* were the lands given to officials commissioned with the management of alms houses and other pious acts. It is mentioned along with *Brahmadeya*. *Atithya* lands were enjoyed perpetually by the donees. *Ayudhiya* indicated lands granted on condition of a regular supply of troops in lieu of taxes.

Among the tenures, known from the inscriptions, mention may be made of *prakrtyah dharma*, *aksayanivi*, *aprada ksayanivi*, *bhumichidra*, *tribhoga* etc.

(i) Prakrtyahdharma tenure refers to a type of public ownership of land and an example of it can be seen in a grant of king Dharmaditya (551 A.D.)—(*IA*-XXXIX. 197; 204).

(ii) Aksayanivi—Nividharma and *aksayanivi* are almost identical tenures. *Nividharma* indicates that the grant may be enjoyed for ever—as long as the moon, the sun and stars exist. Its confiscation was condemned. The grant by the Satvahan rulers to the Buddhist monks on *aksayanivi* tenure carried with it exemption of taxes and certain administrative rights as digging salt etc. They were, however, not proprietors of land. Land granted under *aksayanivi* system implied perpetual enjoyment of revenue by the grantees without the actual transfer of proprietory rights. The system was quite popular among the *Sakas*, *Satvahanas*, and *Abhiras*. The gifts on *aksayanivi* tenure were made by the Kusana rulers and their feudatories in North India. In the *Nasik Buddhist Cave Inscription* of Usavadata perpetual endowments were made to two different guilds (*EI*-VIII. 82 ff) of which only interest was to be enjoyed by the donee. On *aksayanivi* basis, the Abhiras granted *Karsapanas* to the trade guilds of *Odayantrikas* for the purpose of providing medicine to sick monks living in the monastery of Trirasmi (Nasik Hill) (*EI*-VIII. 89) The *aksayanivi* was fairly popular in the post-Mauryan period. The donees had no power of transfer, sale or destruction of the tenure which vested in the state. It is clearly mentioned in *Bihar Stone Pillar Inscription* of Skandagupta and in other inscriptions of the Gupta period.

(iii) Apradaksayanividharma—It may be compared to *aksayanivi* system. It implies non-transferability. Untilled nature of the land (*aprada*) is to be ended by the payment of the stipulated price. This type of tenure indicates a transfer of its ownership from its owner to another to be enjoyed in perpetuity (*EI*. XV. No. 7).

(iv) Bhumichidra—Kautilya has used *Bhumichidravidhanam* to imply uncultivable land. The practice appears to have originated from a system of permitting a person to cultivate for the first time a piece of uncultivated fallow or jungle land, exempt from rent. This type of tenure was often granted for increasing the spiritual merit of the donor himself or of his parents. From *Khoh Copperplate* we learn that the ownership was transferred to the donee permanently and confiscation was prohibited (*CII*-III.138). This system was in vogue under the Guptas from the fourth to the eighth century A.D. It was a practise of permitting a person to cultivate an uncultivated

land which was rent-free. It stood for the reclamation of fallow land which was also cultivable. It was a type of tenure by which virgin, fallow and cultivable land was brought under cultivation but its transfer of ownership was made permissible in certain cases.

(*v*) *Bhogagamas* :—The *Jatakas* refer to *Bhogagamas* which were enjoyed by the grantees in royal service or members of the royal families or *Purohitas*. The grant was tenable during the tenure of the service of the grantees. It was not hereditary and it ultimately reverted to the State. There is nothing to show that it was free from royal taxes. Ownership of soil by the King and sub-infeudation by king's assignees are unknown to the *Jatakas*. It was the policy of Kautilya to discourage the assignments of land. Minor officers and Brahmanas were granted assignments of fields in the newly colonised rural area at the time of state colonisation of wastelands. The officers enjoyed assignments without the right of sale or mortgage. The Brahmanas, alone, were granted permanent rent-free occupation of their holdings. King is warned against granting villages (*AS*.V.3). *Samaharta* entered in his revenue roll the villages liable to military service. Landgrants were also confiscation. The lands must have been confiscated other wise there would have been no reference to it in the *Arthashastra*.

V

Land Revenue

Classification of land

Before going into the details of the land revenue, let us take into account the classification of land in ancient India. There were various types of land as listed below—

(i) *Vastu* (site for houses)
(ii) *Sita, uravara, sitya, kristha, gramya* (fertile lands)
(iii) *kedara*—watery or wet lands
(iv) plains—
(v) marginal furrows
(vi) low grounds
(vii) marshy lands
(viii) land beaten by the foam of water
(ix) land frequently overflown by water

(x) land watered by regular rains
(xi) land in the vicinity of wells (*mulavapa*)
(xii) *anurvara, usara, akristha, khila* (salty, fallow, barren and uncultivated tracts)
(xiii) forests, rocks, hills, mountains, uneven lands, desert;
(xiv) depression in ground and land full of pebbles;
(xv) deep ditches
(xvi) elevated or high table land *(sthala)*
(xvii) roads;
(xviii) grazing grounds *(gochara, vivita)*.
(xix) gardens and groves (*aram*)
(xx) mines and quarries (*khan*).

Broadly speaking, there were habitable lands, arable lands, wasteland, pasture land etc. According to Kautilya, the country had a variety of landscapes. According to *Milindapanha*, the earth remains just the same whether one scatters upon it desirable things or the reverse. The *Sthala* consisted of both the cultivable and habitable lands. Arable land was meant for cultivation and *vastu* was meant for building sites. The *Mahavastu* refers to different types of arable land which was preferred to all other lands for the very existence depended on it. Kautilya discusses the importance of arable land (*kheta* or *ksetra*) as it produced all kinds of agricultural products. The roads played a pivotal role in country's inland trade and rural economy. Kautilya attaches equal importance to pasture lands.

The grant of one-sixth of land revenue was for the protection of the subjects by the king and that is evident from the Epics and other contemporary sources. In the Vedic period *Bali* was granted. It was offered to god as well as to king (*balihrt*). Ultimately it came to be paid as a tribute and with Kautilya it became a special religious tax. It was collected, in the Vedic period, by an officia called *Bhagadugh*. According to the *Jatakas*, *Rajabhaga* (king's share) was set apart. There was practise of estimating crops and the assessor had to be an expert. Besides one-sixth share, there were various other charges and the rates of such charges varied from time to time and also with the localities. According to Kautilya, the following rates are prescribed——

(i) *Hastapravartimam*—Who cultivated land by irrigating it by means of manual labour had to pay one-fifth of the produce as water rate (*Udakabhagam*) ;

(ii) *Skandapravartimam*—if the cultivation was undertaken by carrying water on shoulders they had to pay one-fourth of the produce;

(iii) *Srotoyantrapravartimam*—In the waterlifts payment was one-third of the produce;

(iv) *Nadisarastatakakupapdghatam*—If the cultivation was made by raising water from rivers, lakes, tanks and wells, the payment was either one-third or one-fourth of the produce.

(v) **Svaviryopajivinah**—those who lived by their own physical exertion had to pay one-fourth or one-fifth of the produce grown.

The cultivators had to pay one-fourth of their grains, one-sixth of the forest produce and of such commodities like cotton, wax, barks of trees, firewood, bamboos, meat and dried meat. The rate of one-sixth seems to have varied to even half of the produce in extreme circumstances. Megasthenes noticed that the Indians paid a land tribute to the king and besides this they paid into the royal treasury a fourth part of the produce of the soil. Arrian is vague and strabo is confusing. Fahien, Hiuentsang and Itsing are not specific on this issue.

Gautama holds that cultivators should pay a tax amounting to one-tenth, one-eighth or one-sixth of the produce. Baudhayan has recommended one-sixth. Vasistha does not refer to any rates of the revenue payable to the King who is cautioned against the improper use of his subjects, property. Visnu recommends a sixth part of the grain every year. Manu authorised the King to take one-sixth of agricultural produce. Narad refers to one-sixth and Brhaspati refers to sixth, ninth and twelfth part from the property of a Sudra, Vaisya and Ksatriya and twelfth from a Brahmana. Katyayan recommends one-sixth and suggests that King's ownership of land is restricted to taking one-sixth of the produce as a tax. Payment of sixth part was noticed by Hiuentsang and Itsing.

The Crownlands were entrusted to the charge of *Sitadhyaksa* who employed *Grambhrtakas* (village servants), day labourers, slaves and prisoners to get the State lands cultivated. Sometimes he let these lands to cultivators who were obliged to supply him, and occasionally other officers also, with vegetables, grains and other produce without payment. The collection of revenue was entrusted to the charge of officers (e. g. officer over ten, hundred, thousand estates etc.). The taxes relating to pastures and cattle etc. and the privileges of free labour must be regarded as having been realised and enjoyed by the estate owners, who, in their own turn, were obliged to pay from one-fourth to one-sixth of their income to their suzerain.

⁂

CHAPTER—6

Feudalism in Ancient India

The study of feudalism in ancient Indian economy raises a number of problems as we have no fixed theoritical model, as in England or France, which can be applied to our situation. All stages of social development were interlocked in ancient India. There was no European conception of feudalism which tied the peasants to land socially, economically and hereditarily for the benefit of a military class of landed proprietors and, therefore, Hussaini's generalisation that "the entire period of primitive capitalist economy with period of slavery,.........a very large part of the cultivable land was appropriated by the king and especially priestly class which played a vital role in keeping the masses under subjection by taking advantage of their credulity and superstition. ....led to a new production relation in land depriving a large mass of peasantry" needs further re-examination and critical reappraisal.

One of the specific factors distinguishing Indian form of feudalism was the predominance of state owned lands. Its features are quite distinct from the European model. The restrictions on the mobility of peasants and others and their subjection under the conditions characterised by the closed local autonomy and the emergence of landed intermediaries and a heirarchy of ruling landed aristocracy constitute an essential ingredients of feudalism. Many of the elements of feudalism signifying the developments of feudal tendencies emerged in the middle ages as a result of the then emerging economic forces. Glimpses of feudal complex can be seen in the *Sajjan Plate* of Amoghavarsa. Feudalism denoted a general concept of social development.

In the post-Mauryan period when the handicraft production moved into countryside, the village became virtually self-sufficient, a unit of basic production and immediate consumption along with the free but unpropertied Sudras as the main source of expropriable labour. State officials came to be paid in perquisites and a share of the revenue. While the army is dispersed in local garrisons (*Gulma*), taxes for the labourers and artisans are not in cash but in the form of labour for the State—that is, *Corvee*. Local and guild custom came to be observed in the administration of justice. With the rise of Brahmanical ascendancy in the political field, religion became a very important adjunct in the State. Vaisya and Sudras are required by Manu to be tied compulsorily to their work of production. In spite of increased production, commodity production decreased and artisans' connection with consumer was direct and local. After the Mauryas, the Satvahanas continued the process of integrating tribal groups into general society by importing Brahmanas from north India. The first direct step in breaking the village economy was heavy increase in taxes and most of the land was transferred into feudal property—a process of feudalism from below as against the earlier feudalism from above. Production and exchange were also transformed by this concentration of surplus—the feudal owner being a necessary complement to the trader.

Manu's assignment of productive functions to Vaisya-Sudra (not exactly slaves) shows that the *varna* system played a significant role in the production of surplus. The structure of peasant economy was disturbed during the early centuries of the Christian era when the kings began to transfer their fiscal and administrative rights over lands to their subordinate chiefs who thus came into direct relations with the peasantry—(feudalism from above). Later a class of landowners developed within the village between the State and the peasantry and wielded armed power on the local population (feudalism from below).

The estate owners were known us *Rajans, Rajanakas, Amatyas, Rajanyakas, Samantas, Maulas, Rajas, Ganas, Ganarayas, bhojas, Kulaputras, Ksatriyas* etc. According to Pran Nath, the *rajanakas* of the inscriptions, the *rajans* of the Lichchavis and the *Samantas* of Kautilya refer to the same class of people. The soldiers in the service of these Samantas, impelled by their greed, attacked the country and estates belonging to others and the people were afraid of them. They were a great hindrance to the development of agriculture, trade and industry. The people had to leave their villages and flee into the forests. A strong king was well advised to get rid of these *Samantas* and turn them into an agricultural community. Pran Nath believes that the *Samantas* of Kautilya were merely the landowning class and they should be reduced into peaceful and loyal landowners. Important officials should be appointed from amongst them and the relations of these *Samantas* with the king were based on agreements which varied in different cases—A Samanta could either—

(i) Provide a fixed number of troops whenever so required;

(ii) supply a commander of his army and place his heir in the king's custody as a hostage;

(iii) march with his army against another country whenever ordered to do so;

(iv) give to the king ladies of his household and the lending men of his estate as hostages to assure his allegiance;

(v) pay a certain amount of money every year;

(vi) Give the produce of his lands and even more than his lands produce.

Kautilya was in favour of suppressing all powerful persons and to bring their property directly under the control of the king. He was strongly opposed to any claim of independence of the part of the urban aristocrats or village landowning classes.

In the post-Mauryan period religious and secular grants became increasingly popular leading to the rise of landed intermediaries. Previously the grants had been temporary but gradually they assumed hereditary character. Earlier grants had only affected the rights of land usage but had not related to any rights over peasants. The entrenchment of hereditary rights of private owners had made them fairly independent of central administration. King granted certain privileges, the so-called immunity rights, and these new owners acquired certain administrative rights and functions over the land. They started to carry out certain legal functions. The king freed them from the previous obligations to admit royal functionaries to their lands. Feudal landowners became entitled to administer justice. The peasants became increasingly dependent on their masters. The feudal lords acted as local governors, gave parts of his lands for services rendered without seeking the sanction of the ruler.

One of the earliest references to such rights is a found in a Satvahana inscription of the second century A. D. and this procedure is an unmistakable pointer to the process of feudalism not only in the north but also in the south. Gautamiputra Satkarni donated lands to the Buddhist monks and freed the village community from the presence of the king's troops on their lands as well as from the interference of the state functionaries. This practice became widespread after the Fifth century A. D. When the kings started to delegate almost fiscal, administrative, and legal functions connected with the privately owned land to the owners themselves, the rights over mines were also transferred. This practice brought the status of temporary landowners still nearer to that of hereditary feudal lords and peasants came under their domination. Tenant farmers, often bereft of any means of production, became completely dependent on the owners. Such donations transferred the right of collecting taxes and donees sought to increase their land rights.

In later landgrants lands would change hands together with the men working at them. In one of the earliest records of such transactions,-a third century A. D. Pallava Inscription-, it is stated that the share cropper would remain bound to land after its transfer and such people were reduced to serfdom. There is another Vakataka record of the fifth century A. D. to show that those tilling the land are made over to the new landowner. Peasants and artisans were attached to the soil. The practice came to embrace independent peasants. A sixth century grant of the early Chalukya King of Badami-records a grant of land along with the house in which the peasants lived. In Gujerat, Orissa and Central India, the practice began in the sixth century A. D. It seems to have been fairly common by about the eighth century A, D. and it stands confirmed from a Chinese account of A. D. 732. Karnataka epigraphic records show that the donations of lands and villages were often accompanied by transfer of peasants and artisans.

The economic essence of Indian feudalism lay in the rise of landed intermediaries leading to the enserfment of peasantry through restrictions on their mobility and freedom, increasing obligation to forced labour, mounting tax burden through subinfeudations. Tendency to impose restriction on peasants' freedom and mobility is clearly marked. From the Gupta period onwards, the Indian peasantry was subjected to surplus extraction. Peasants and other producing classes were attached to the soil and were required to perform free or forced labour. Restrictions on their mobility reduced them to the position of serfs. By and large, attributes of feudalism in one form or the other like serfdom, self-sufficient economic units, feudalisation of crafts and Commerce, declining trade and urbanisation etc. are found in India. The most critical element in Indian feudalism consisted of the growing dependence of the peasantry on the landed intermediaries. The emergence of feudalism is attributed to state action in granting land in lieu of salary and the action of the grantees in subjugating the peasantry.

It is wrong to hold that a subsequent stage began when the previous one ended. We can not apply any fixed theoritical model to Indian situation. If landgrants are to be taken as marking the beginning of feudal element, the system seems to be as old as the *Brahmanas*, Buddhist literature, *Arthashastra*, where we come across reference to the merits of *Bhumidana* (or land gift). Secular grants are few and far between. Most of the grants, religious or secular, created private rights in land and the intermediaries, thus created, continued to flourish in an agrarian economy. Ksutilya recommends the grant of tax free lands to *rtvika* (preceptor), *purohita* (chaplain), *srotriya* (learned brahmanas) etc. (*AS*—II.2). The mention of *Brahmadeya* and *Ayudhiyu* lands is also important and deserves consideration. The revenue collector was required to prepare a statement showing villages that are exempted from taxation and those that supply soldiers (I 2; II. 30). Military officers were assigned lands.

If land tenure based on military system be taken as essential element of feudalism, we may trace the beginning of it here, where slaves did form an important element in production. Feudalism, as is understood in the west, had not the same connotation here but the scholars of the socialist countries like Russia and East Germany have, of late, begun to trace its beginning in Kautilya in one form or the other. The evolution of society might have passed through various stages in which certain elements of feudalism creeped in but without any effective result in the beginning. Kautilya is yet studied by the from scholars their own pre-conceived notions and scholars of different shades have interpreted Kautilya in their own light. Kautilya's ideas are yet to be assessed in the background of the age in which he flourished and his concept of *Samanta* deserves further elucidation and scientific interpretation.

Antonova has discussed the essential features of feudalism in which a new type of production relation in land developed—

(i) theoritical ownership of land by the king;
(ii) direct ownership of the land by the monarch
(iii) tax-free land enjoyed by the princes, priests, warriors;
(iv) sub-infeudation;
(v) economic immunities granted to the upper classes;
(vi) commendation;
(vii) oppressive taxes.

Kosambi holds that every feudalism known to history rested upon primitive handicraft production and upon a special type of landownership. The transfer of revenue and surrender of police and administrative functions facilitated the rise of feudalism. Royal commands were issued that no disturbance should be caused to the beneficiaries. The donee could thus turn the benefice into independent pockets. The cultivators were ordered to obey the donee. There was feudalisation of administration,—local administration in the region by the feudatories and local government of sovereign in the capital. We have examples of four generations of governors (the Datta-karanas) at Pundravardhanabhukti and five generations of office holders in one family in central India. Sometimes even *Visayas* were governed by the feudatories.

With feudalism caste performed an administrative function still keeping the primary producers at work without too much of force. The feudal economic system made the caste taboo as the barrier for protection of vested interests in each socio-economic group. While king was the regulator of all castes and stages of religious life, the possession of land was essential to the legitimacy of the leadership claimed by the nobility since land and caste differentiated them from the rest of the society. Brahmanas formed an essential adjunct of the state in reducing the mechanism of violence. Their knowledge of calendar, seed, crop, cattle breeding, of distant markets, value of crops etc., useful for exchange made them pioneers into the uncultivated territory. They were instrumental in bringing under cultivation the new territories and their preaching of submission naturally reduced the administrative cost. They were in demand everywhere on account of their knowledge. Even the Smiths, Carpenters, Potters, Barbers, servants and other categories of servicemen were granted lands in lieu of services. Such grants to the officers led to the growth of feudal conditions. The landgrants follow a set pattern formulae irrespective of time and place and most of them are yet inexplicable. Harsha kept one-fourth of the crown lands for public servants. Hiuentsang's testimony is unequivocal and clearly shows the growth of feudal tendency (a fact supported by Banabhatta).

The Satvahana grants carried the rights of administration of justice and maintenance of law and order. According to Buddhaghosh, the *Brahmadeya* land carried with it judicial and administrative rights. With the decline of trade and money economy in the post-Gupta period, the village was developing as the centre of economic life. The state assigned its function to the intermediaries and the quasi-feudal character of the economy came to the fore. Invasions, wars, migrations, and excessive needs for defence and protection of the agricultural lands must have helped the process of feudalisation in the post-Gupta period. The landgrants led to the establishment of Brahmanas' supremacy and standing in special relation to the king they fulfilled one of the essential conditions of feudalism. In the absence of a strong central authority, concessions to local authority were always generous and that enabled the feudal nobles to entrench themselves strongly in their possessions. Resilience of feudalism came out of the geographical reasons.

In the second half of the sixth century A.D., feudal tendencies became discernible in Orissa and that is evident from the three inscriptions from Soro which record the grant of villages along with revenue to officers in lieu of their salaries. We learn from the *Dudhpani Rock Inscription* (8th Century A.D.—from Hazaribagh) that Udayamana, Shridhautumana and Ajitamana were made rulers of three villages. Administrative units of a kingdom used to be allotted to different persons to be enjoyed by them as rulers. This inscription is sufficient to indicate the existence of feudalism. (*EI*—II.343). Here we have an example of commendation in the feudal sense (*PIHC*—1968).

By the end of the fifth century A.D., *Samanta* came to be used as a subordinate ruler and we have a reference to *Rajasamanta visayabhogika* (*IA*—VII.33). *Samanta* was a subordinate ruler in the feudal period and he also acted as a *Dutaka*. As subordinate rulers they ruled over their respective regions as is implied by the use of the titles and terms indicating rulership. When making grants they exercised their rights as rulers. They had simply to acknowledge the suzerainty of their overlords. At times they were treated as officers of the State (*EI*—XVIII.7). The use of *Panchamahasabda* (*Samkha*, *Srnga*, *Tamata*, *Bheri* and *Jayaghanta*) was a privilege awarded to subordinate rulers by the sovereign king to indicate their privileged status. The *Panchamahasabda* ceremony was not prevalent befor 8th century A.D. It was used in Kashmir in different sense. It was conferred upon the powerful and influential feudatories.

A *Samanta* paid his allegiance and dues only as long as the suzerain was powerful and was always on the look out to declare his independence. The paramount power was always conscious of this danger and tried to keep the *Samantas* under control as loyal subordinates. Military tenures were not unknown and public servants, ministers of state, common officials and others had their portions of land. We have references to *Maraya* (military fiefs) in Tamil country. Brhspati mentions the scales of remuneration or sizes of the fiefs of king's officers. The villagers were asked to be obedient to the donee. (*CII*—III.132).

The inscriptions of the *Parivrajakas*, the *Uchakalpas*, Maharaj Laksmana and Subandhu have only veiled reference to their overlords (that is, the Guptas). The inscription of Manadeva of Nepal describes how the subordinate rulers used to raise their banner of revolt at the first sign of confusion after the death of sovereign king. Prabhakaravardhana churned the whole range of feudatories drunk with the intoxication of valorous frenzy. The Maukharis, Vardhanas and Aulikaras (all feudatories) hardly make any reference to their overlords. There are also references to kings having subdued their subordinates by their might. It was a common belief that the *Samantas* remained loyal only through the fear of the might of the sovereign. The *Aihole Inscription* remarks that the *Latas*, *Malavas* and *Gurjaras* subdued by Pulakesin II's splendour became as it were teachers of how *Samantas* subdued by force ought to behave. Harsha's army consisted of *Samantas*. The *Samantas* won the favour of their sovereigns by means of personal service. Some permanently resided at the court and some occupied important administrative posts. In his *Kadambari*, Bana paints a very lively picture of a concourse of subordinate crowned kings. Those occupying administrative posts were known as—

(i) **Dutaka,** (ii) **Mahapramatar,** (iii) **Mahaksapataladhikaranadhikrta,** (iv) **Bhandagaradhikrtamahasamanata,** (v) **Mahapratihara,** (vi) **Sarvadhikaradhikrta,** (vii) **Mahakartakritika,** (viii) **Mahadandanayaka,** (ix) **Mahasamanta, Samanta** and various others etc.—

According to *Aparajitaprchcha* of Bhuvandeva, a *Samanta* denoted a chieftain or the noble having the right to a certain fixed income. *Kathasaritasagar* refers to individuals being made *Samantas* by the king who also sometimes dismissed them and appointed others. Kalhan holds that even though they ceased to exist as a class of subordinate rulers, they continued to exist as a class of privileged nobles enjoying landed property. *Mahasandhivigarhika* (an officer of the State) was incharge of royal policy towards vassals and feudatories of all kinds and he was also responsible for drafting of all types of grants. Feudal hierarchy is clearly evinced in a number of inscriptions. Feudatory chiefs of the Pallava king are seen paying homage to their overlord. Valorous acts of feudal lords are rewarded. Though in India, feudalism did not originate from the establishment of a military class over the peasantry, military obligations became more important after A.D.1000. The feudatories has to fulfil certain obligations. Feudal grades and heirarchical set ups are found in a number of inscriptions of north and South India but their order of precendence on all India basis cannot be ascertained in the present state of our knowledge. On the whole, the feudal nobles were an idle and worthless class economically unproductive, socially exploitative and politically living as parasites around an atmosphere of hate and love.

Feudalism in India developed in course of the evolution of the Indian people. Society was based on the exploitation of groups who produced. Features of feudal obligations are discernible. Feudal economic pattern had taken shape early but feudal relations became dominant later. Collection of taxes by coercion was a feature of the early system. Feudalism was proceeding at two levels—

(i) more and more lands that brought in rent were being distributed as grants and the grantees came to enjoy more and more rights both in relation to the sovereign and to the inhabitants dependent on them;

(ii) within the village community itself the village officials gained greater powers among the villagers; their functions with regard to the division of land-tax within their village acquired increasing importance—they became rural administrators and some of them became petty feudal landlords belonging to the state apparatus—The upper strata of the village community often actually turned feudal.

The period between A.D. 700. and 1200 was one of feudal consolidation. The two upper classess acquired vast landed property and also the collection of taxes and dues on those property. In Tamilnadu even these donees granted villages to others (*EI*—XXVII.298). In the charter of Visnusena (A.D.592) we come across or the first time a *Samanta* being treated as a feudal viscount personally responsible to the king and a part of tax collecting mechanism. Feudalism indicated a chain of personal loyalty which bound retainers to chief, tenant to lord, and baron to king and emperor—loyalty with a secure foundation in the means and relations of productions, landownership, military service, tax collection and the conversion of local produce into commodities. It is in this light that the concept of *Bhakti* has been taken as an ideological base of feudalism. It helped to hold the feudal society and the state together.

The vassals had to pay a certain amount of annual tribute and render military service when called upon to do so. They owed allegiance to paramount authority but there does not appear to have existed any contractual basis of relationship. It is not exactly the type of relation of lord and vassal usually associated with feudalism in the west. The European type of manorial system is not found here in its true prototype though conditions of a similar development at a particular period cannot be ruled out. The obligation of military service bears resemblance to European pattern to some extent. In India there was nothing analogous to the Roman conception of Dominicum and sovereign's powers was not regarded as absolute. Hence there did not occur so frequently a conflict between the king and the baronage.

The boundaries of almost all states in the feudal age (700-1200) were changing so fast that it was difficult for the feudal nobility to be inspired by a sense of loyalty to the State. The vassals held no more than the well-defined title to the collection of tax and the conflict between the king and the feudatories did not, therefore, lead to a political and constitutional development. There were intermediaries of different grades, different powers, different environments, different languages whose allegiance was never centralised and focussed on a single person and who were scattered widely over an immense territory. To a great extent, Indian feudalism remained fiscal and only partially military in character. The lord exacted his share of produce. The exploited peasantry had neither recorded rights nor safeguards. What the masters wanted was not the land but the surplus.

In Kashmir, the *Damaras* were armed nobles with their own fortified strongholds. It was with the help of the feudal nobles that Lalitaditya was able to build up his empire. The *Damaras* had under their command both infantry and cavalry forces. The centrifugal tendencies were accentuated by the feudatories. They indulged in civil wars and contemporary politics. Such nobles had acquired sufficient powers in different part of India at different periods. The greater nobles and vassals held their own courts, dispensed justice and assigned fiefs to their subordinates (BI-III.268). Such nobles constituted a class of feudal vassals. The *Dudhapani Rock Inscription* informs us that merchants turned into feudal lords. According to Hiuentsang the practice of surrendering lands to the landlords in lieu of protection was already known and prevalent. This practice of commendation stands confirmed by the epigraphic sources and Kalhana. Under this system many people sought protection under the powerful barons.

Military chiefs also received grants in lieu of their services. According to Kane, the hereditary army consisted of persons whose ancestors got tax free lands in lieu of military service.

Antonova has drawn our attention to the following types of grants -

to captains
to chiefs of the elephants
to ruler's son-in-law
to ruler's mother
to court scribe
to vassals
to court physicians and astrologers.

Various other types of grants are also known:—
grants to Brahmanas with right of alienation
grants to officer for public charity
grants to officials in lieu of service
grants to milltary fiefs on condition of
supplying troops

The Brahmana donees enjoyed all items of royal dues and they could punish or evict tenants who refused to pay their dues. The donee had nothing to pay to the government. The *Chamak copperplate* of Pravarasena II (CII—III.241ff) brings out the following points:—

not to pay taxes
not to be entered by regular troops
is entirely free from all obligations of forced labour
it carried with it hidden treasures and deposits and *klipta* and *upaklipta*
it be protected and increased by all possible means.

Conditions for the maintenance of the charters were—
that they commit no treason against the kingdom
that they are not the slayers of the Brahmanas
that they are not thieves, adulterers and poisoners of king
that they do not wage war
that they do not do wrong to other villages
if they act otherwise the king will commit no theft by taking the land away.

The prevalence of forced labour in land charters ranging from the second century A.D. to the eleventh century A. D. in Western. Central and Rajasthan areas of the country is remarkble. It is also found in the Bengal records of the twelfth century A.D. It was an important adjunct of the feudal system. It was common in the Mauryan period and is mentioned in a number of inscriptions all over the country. Kalhan reports that the village were forced to carry loads and at times it was so harsh that the priests had to go on hunger strike on a mass scale to force the king to withdraw the order. The donees could increase the amount of forced labour at their discretion for which there was no hard and fast rule. It sometimes implied ejection of peasants by the beneficiaries. Specialisation of

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labour in the rural economy led to the proliferation of subcastes in the villages. Peasants were being held arbitrarily by the feudal lords for *corvee* labour. Even the artisans did not remain unattached. The extreme rigidity of caste was a manifestation of the village life. The free village artisans were protected against overexploitation by their caste. The insularity of the village became unshakable and it had to make itself self-sufficient without any commodity production. Hereditary caste system promoted self-sufficient economy. It gave rise not only to many subcastes but also to local religious cults and typical art and provincial languages. The rise of local units of production under mined the authority of the king.

Under the feudal set-up, the villages were mostly based on self sufficient economy with almost no surplus. The peasants did not produce surplus since it would have led to a demand for larger share from the landowners. The result was that the production gradually came down to subsistence level. It further led to the depression of peasantry who were forced to pay additional taxes. The self-sufficient villages reduced the mobility of the peasants and power now shifted to the landowing communities. Later feudal States were based upon a powerful landowning class that collected taxes, supplied cavalry and officers for the army and was held together by a strong chain of personal loyalties—that lay at the base of feudalism. The long list of rights accompanying the grants indicate that new actual proprietory rights were transferred—

that is,

to listen to the orders of the donees
to carry them out
to perform personal service
to convery message.

It appears from the charter of Visnusena (EI—XXX. 163-81) that the merchants came at the mercy of feudal lords who controlled the surplus and were the major purchasers of costliest merchandise. The royal privillege of paying a lower price for craftsmen work is characteristically feudal and was later claimed by the barons as well. the charter is an important document for a study of feudalism in its varied aspect. Without surplus there could be no extension of

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trade and absence of trade led to decrease of coins. Metal and salt were procured by exchange. The wealth of kings and feudatories was spent in unproductive work and the extension of feudatories at different levels led to wider diffusion of income from land-the intermediaries becoming more important at the cost of the cultivator and the king. It led to the consequent dependence of the king on feudatories.

When power shifted to the landowning communities, internal trade remained at the irreducible minimum. The old guilds lost their importance and with their disappearance the type of village production became the norm and cities declined. Trade also suffered a decline. The urban life disappeared. The essence of feudalism lay in the alienation of land by the king to the donee and in creating a productive relation on land which affected the entire socio-economic structure. The intermediaries provided some sort of economic basis for the rise of feudalism.

For the upkeep of self-sufficient economy of the village, it was necessary that all sections of primary producers should live in villages. Local needs were locally satisfied and that was the basic characteristic of the feudal economy. The chief characteristics of the feudal economy were—

- (i) feudal ownership of land
- (ii) sluggish trade and commerce
- (iii) serfdom of peasants
- (iv) economy based on self-sufficient local system

These are not similar to the European system but feudalism is definitely apparent in India in the post Gupta period with varying features.

The Palas and the Pratiharas also maintained secular intermdiaries in land, the vassals and officials, who were rewarded with villages for their services. The religious grantees were free from all taxes to the state but the secular grantees possibly paid some tribute. The royal right of resumption was clearly transferred to the grantee. All agrarian rights were also transferred. All inhabitants of the village along with the vassals and official were invoked to give their consent to the grants mady by the pala rulers though that was an empty formality. The period also saw the growth of individual occupancy rights. Communal property was turned into feudal property (EI—I.No.20). The practice of sub-infeudation helped the subjection of peasantry. The grantees possessed power not only of sub-infeudation but also of eviction and imposition of non-customary taxes and *Visti* (forced labour) and conversion of income from trade and craft into benefices.

It has been asserted that there were four stages of intermediary landed interest between the king and the cultivator (*Vavahara-mayukha*, P.86). The peasants had no legal remedies against the oppressive grantees. The grantees were not only charged with maintaining law and order but also with realising various revenues which would not have been possible without engaging subordinate staff. If Gujerat and Rajasthan, religious grantees emerged as landed intermediaries incharge of police and fiscal administration. Parasar permits Brahmanas to practise agriculture. More than two dozen officials are mentioned in the Bhaglpur Copperplate of Narayanapal who were connected with the fiscal system. The greater part of the Pratihar empire was governed by the feudatories who relied for administration on their subfeudatories. The tendency to feudalise officers was greater under the Pratiharas. Though the secular assignees are very few, certain titles in Oriya inscriptions seem to stand for landed vassals—

> *bhupala* indicated landed baron
> *bhogis*, *samantas*, *mahattaras* and
> *mahamahattaras*, *ranakas*, *rajyanaka*,
> *rajaputras* etc. were all landed vassals

The *Rastrakutas* gave the religious donees more excessive powers.

The epigraphical and architectural records of South India throw light on various aspects of feudalism in South India. The practice of forced labour, free labour, labour on specified occasions, free food etc.—was in vogue in South India. The rigours of collection invariably tended to be oppressive and kept the people under permanent threat of surveillance. The usual and the most common method of remunerating the official was that of assigning land and the feudatories played a leading part in this scheme of things. Temples were also great feudal centres. Feudalism existed in different forms in different parts of the country.

Cases of feudal families ruling for generations are also known in South India. Assignments were made in favour of public servants in South India. The Pallavas and the Cholas had their own vassals. A typical feudal example of a political compact between three chiefs of the Chola rulers was engraved on the temple wall. The prevalence of service tenure is a regular feature of the chola polity. The grant of military fiefs marked an advance of feudalism under the Cholas. Feudal obligations are mentioned in a number of inscriptions. Feudal heirarchy is wellmarked in South Indian inscriptions. The landed intermediaries and temple authorities played their part in the development of feudal economy. The feudal economic institutions were related to and integrated with the control of land. The feudal tenure reached its high watermark under the Vijayanagar empire. The common man was so much harassed by these feudal lords that they could not develop spirit of patrotism and it also stood in the way of national cohesion. Evils of feudal anarchy have been nicely depicted by Kalhana.

The feudalisation of state structure had an adverse effect on the economic life as the burden of taxation became heavy. The villagers had to pay a number of extra taxes over and above the dues they paid to the state. Various peoples enjoyed villages by deceitful manifestations (*Desinamamala*-IV.48,90). The feudal chiefs imprisoned rich people to extract money. The villagers concealed their property from royal officials. The oppressive taxes brought villagers to a very low level of subsistence. Verse No.1175 of the *Subhasitaratnakosa* described the ruined conditions of a village which was depopulated as a result of exactions by the feudal chiefs. The terms like *niyataniyata* and *uchitaauchita* suffixed to the list of taxes (*EI*-X.p.99; *JUPHS* XXIII. 228-50; *JBORS* XVII.1 ff.) amount to a recognition of the possibility of new taxes being imposed and also of their being unjust in some cases. The contemporary legal opinion sanction feudal exactions. Medhatithi (on Manu.X.119) observes that the Vaisyas are very wealthy and hence the officers appointed to extract money from them are not to be punished even if they do them wrong. The feudal chiefs indulged in loot and plunder and created difficulties in carrying on interstate trade. The feudal wars also crippled the economy and the sacking of cities seems to have been a common feature and one can simply imagine the economic dislocation resulting from these wars. Trade and commerce suffered much.

Theoritically a feudal lord had the right only to collect the revenue but in practice the system mostly became hereditary practically when the dependence of the king on feudal lords increased. They assumed titles according to their status and enjoyed semi-independent authority in their regions. The powerful feudatories created a regular heirarchy of sub-feudatories under them.

From the administrative point of view the feudal system had this advantage that there was no need for a centrally administered bureaucracy. Revenue was collected by the feudal chiefs and the executive and judicial functions were also carried on by them in their respective areas. The feudatory chiefs served the purpose of regional administrators.

The salient feature of the Indian feudal system may be categorised as follows.

(1) feudal owners held theoritical ownership within their domains and it belonged to the feudal occupant.

(2) Feudal rulers also issued landgrants to the princess, blood relations, civil and military officers, priests and religious places, vassals and also created fiefs.

(3) Fiefs were created on two conditions payment of fixed tribute or rendering military service.

(4) Fief holders enjoyed the full administrative or hereditary rights.

(5) Feudal grants or fiefs were tax-free.

(6) Feudal heirarchy existed and they were paid through endowments or assignments.

(7) Different categories of tenants were there.

Feudal economy continued to hold sway in India. There was feudalisation of administrative machinery.

The feudal system had its certain obvious disadvantages. The king was not in a position to utilise the entire economic resources of the state either for public welfare or for strengthening the military power as all the economic advantages were grabbed by the feudatories themselves. The competition among the feudatories resulted in mutual rivalries, family feuds and enmity and this weakened the position of the king particularly when he was dependent on them. That also led to the development of regional loyalties which went against the unity of the country. The system adversely affected the fortunes of the peasantry who were subjected to illegal extortions. They were reduced to a condition of helplessness. Power was concentrated in the hands of feudal nobles who commanded both socio-economic and politcal prestige in the then political set-up.

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CHAPTER—7

Agriculture

The earliest man lived by hunting in forests or fishing in the rivers or acquiring fruits in the forests. He did not know to pasture cattle or agriculture. He was ignorant of pottery or of metal and knew no private property. He was dependent for all kinds of weapons or tools on stones or bones. In course of time handmade pottery came to be replaced by potterl's wheel and neolithic age was replaced by copper age in north India and stone tools wer superseded by iron without any intermediate stage in south India. with the domestication of animals and beginning of agriculture, preservation and utilisation of forests came to be valued. Water courses were dug out. Canals, wells and *ghattichakra* or *araghatta* are mentioned as means of irrigation. Agriculture was a part of the Vedic economy. The very word '*Arva*, is said to be connected with *krishi*. Agriculture products came to be used as currency in the Vedic period and formed an important part of the Vedic economy.

The Vedic aryans in the beginning were pastoral tribes but in India they took to agriculture. Bulls were used to draw the ploughs. Rice, Barley, Wheat, Sugarcane etc. were produced. Plough and ploughshares are objects of worships in the *Rigveda*. Further progress was made in the field of agriculture in the later Vedic period. The plough was large and heavy as many as twenty four oxen being harnessed to one. In addition to irrigation, manure was also used, The *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad* mentions ten kinds of seeds *viz*., rice, barley, sesamum, bean, millet, panic seed, wheat, lentils etc. Winter crops were ready in march. The *white Yajurveda* adds *mudga*, *nibarg*, and *syamakas* rice. The *Taittiriyasamhhita* sums up the seasons of different grains—

> Barley sown in winter is reaped in summer, when it is ripened
> Rice shown in the rains in reaped in an utumn when it is ripened
> Sugarcane, Beans, sesamum planted in the time of summer rains reaped in winter and the cold season.

There were two seasons of harvest. Winter crops were ready in March. The winnower was called *Dhanyakuta*.

We learn from the *Ramayana* that learning consisted of Veda, agriculture and commerce. The agriculturists had to contend with moles, birds and other creatures, drought, excessive rains etc, and they had to acquire knowledge regarding agricultural operations. Famine was not unknown. Dairy farming and forest products were also known to the people. Horticulture was in a high state of effiency. Greek travellers were acquainted with summer and winter crops. According to Greek writers the sugarcane reeds made honey without the agency of bees. Rice was the staple crop of food besides seven other kinds of grains and sugarcane. Panini lists special terms for spring or autumn harvests. At places there were three harvests.

The position of women with regard to agriculture is found in the *Taittirlya Brahmana* and *Satpatha Brahmana*, where it is said that in a sacrificial ritual" as a rule the wife of the sacrificer was present with hands joined to her husband. This participation in harvest offerings can be explained by the fact that in the primitive times the duties of agriculture lay in the hands of women. The cultivation of plantswas oneofwomens' contribution to civilisation. In the beginning agriculture lay in the hands of women but when its benefits were thoroughly understood, it was not allowed to continue as the exclusive prerogative of women. The importance of agriculture can be assessed from the story of Janaka's ploughing the field. With the beginning of agriculture and stock raising, there emerged a new type of life. The chief source of wealth lay in herds. War was seen as an endeavour to acquire more cows and the seizure of livestock was the main cause of conflict between the Vedic tribes. The transport included bullock carts and chariots draw by horses. In the later Vedic period we see transition to a settled way of life based on land cultivation which was further facilitated by thet discovery and use of Iron. Iron was used for various types of production activities and it also promoted advanced craftsmanship. The plough had now sharp point and smooth handle.

With the advancement of crafts came a new set of people known as smiths, potters, carpenters, jwellers, armours etc. The highly esteemed smiths, skill in those days of rural economy were those of carpenters and blacksmiths who made agricultural implements, weapons and houses. There are reference to Ocean going vessels with hundred oars each and also references to treasures of the sea. As a result of surplus agricultural production distinct groups of professional traders emerged. Agriculture became the main form of productive labour. Livestock breeding was equally important and we learn that a rich farmer had twenty seven thousand milching cows. Agricultural surplus sustained trade and commerce and gave rise to a new political force.

By the sixth century B. C., the use of iron had become widespread and various urban centres had come up. The economy, based on a system of village communities and peasant proprietorshid, was mainly rural. Inequality stemmed from difference in property right or social status and the appearance of slavery is a clear pointer to the development of economic and social inequality. Towns were becoming the centres of craftsmanship and trade. Potters, carpenters, blacksmiths, weavers, metal workers, and other technicians were held in high esteem. Sixty occupations are mentioned in the later Vedic literature.

The writings of Scylax, Hecatus of Miletus, Herodotus, Nearchos and others over and above the Buddhist sources give us an insight into the working of agricultural system. According to Nearchos the cultivation of land was by a whole kinship working in association. Each individual took as much as was calculated to support him for a year and the remainder of the common stock was destroyed so as not to encourage idleness. This is an evidence of the fact that sufficient surplus was produced by these people and such surplus productions at different centres might have been channelised towards the urban centres. Aristobulus saw the remains of over a thousand towns and villages. Precious spices were also associated with India in the Greek minds. Horticulture was also in a flourishing state. Plants and trees were maintained in parks and a Greek writer describes, a 'park in Pataliputra in the following words—

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"There were shady groves and trees set in clumps and branches woven together by some special cunning expert of horticultures… …trees themselves are of the sort that are always green"—they never grow old and never shed their leaves……some are brought from other lands with great care and these adorned the place and gave it glory……there are lovely tanks made by hand of men with fishes in them very large……"

Planting of trees was considered auspicious as the trees gratified the deities by their flowers, the *pitris* by their fruits and the guests by their shadows. Trees, should be cherished like children. Many medical plants and roots were produced.

The Buddhist and the Brahmanical sources reveal that the contemporary agricultural society had attained further progress than the earlier ones, The process of cultivation had become more perfect and some new crops were added. New devices of agricultural methods were also introduced. Various processes of agriculture are mentioned in the Buddhist sources and in Panini like ploughing, sowing, weeding, harvesting, thrashing and winnowing etc. In the pre-Mauryan age agriculture was prescribed as the normal occupation of the vaisyas by the *Dharmasutras*.

Agricultural holding was known as *Vastu* comprising *griha* (tenements), *ksetra* (fields), *arama* (garden), *setubandha* (reservoir) *tataka* (tank) etc. *Vastu* was safeguarded by a number of penal clauses. The sale of *Vastu* was allowod subject to the qualification that kinsmen were to have preference over neighbours and neighbours over creditors. Transfer of gifts or sale of fields within the rural area are required to be entered by *Gopa* in field register of villages.

The cultivators are given complete freedom of choice for the growth of crops but in the newly colonised lands the *Samaharta* is empowered to raise a second crop. The state encouraged agriculture through various means. Agricultural loans and remissions were granted to cultivators and these were to be entered by the *Gopa* in the village and census registers, The cultivators were exempt from arrest for non-payment of debt during the cultivating season. For new varieties of crops state encouraged import of rare seeds duty free. A chain of agricultural villages was to be founded at regular distance of one or two *krosas*. Agricultural loans were repayable according to convenience. Lease of prepared fields were to be granted to cultivators With occupancy right for life, and those for unprepared fields were to endure without disturbance. Non-cultivation of field was punishable. All steps were taken for the security of agriculturists and also for maximum production. The classification of soil according to climatic condition and productivity was well-known, Agriculturists were acquainted with the rotation of crops. *Krshisangrah* of Parasar gives a detailed description of agricultural implements and Hemachandra reveals the use of ironshod ploughs.

Accordieg to the Greek writers most of the people in India during the Mauryan period were tillers of soil and lived upon grain. India abounded in vast plains, highly fertile, more or less beautiful and watered by a network of rivers. The country enjoyed a double rainfall. The Indian peasants were laborious, intelligent, frugal and honest. Agriculture flourished under efficient administration, fair and just laws and secure life and property. Agriculture was the chief industry. Megasthenes bears testimony to the fact that even the worst wars did no harm to the farmers. It was king's business to organise agricultural activity by encouraging the surplus population to settle new or abandoned lands or tracts. Rapid expansion of town was a feature of the contemporary of life between 600 and 300 B. C. Urban fortifications were built and town-planning was underway. Pataliputra (25 square miles) was built in the shape of a parallelogram, Kausambi in the form of a trapezium, Sravasti was triangular in shape while Vaisali was rectangular. With the availability of surplus agricultural production, trade flourished and the concept of credit, interest, pawning etc. came to be known and practised.

Irrigation : For the improvement of agricultre there was elaborate system of irrigation and Megasthenes is on record that the greater part of the soil was under irrigation. He says that some superintend the rivers, measure the lands as in Egyps and inspect the sluices by which the water is let out from the main canals into other branches so that everyone may have an equal supply of it. According to Kautilya the water rates varied according to the modes of irrigation by some mechanical contrivance and irrigation by water raised from tanks and rivers. The rates were 1/5, 1/4, 1/3 respectively of the produce of the fields. There were not only means of raising water by bullocks but also by contrivances worked by wind powers or windmills. Kautilya also refers to sluice gates.

Care was taken for keeping tanks and water marks in good repair. Kings and rulers looked to the organisation of agricultural productivity. How important agriculture was is evident from a Tamil source which divided art into six groups of which ploughing was the first and commerce fourth. They attached much importance to ploughing and commerce. Ordures and dungs were recognised as gcod manures.

The early Tamils regarded agriculture as one of the learned arts and ploughing and commerce as of highest importance. Though it was the mainstay of economy, it was not looked upon favourably by Manu who says—"the iron faced block of wood smites the earth and also the animals dwelling in the earth" and the objection to agriculture on the part of the priests is based expressly on these grounds in the law books. A Vaisya was to pursue agriculture, tend cattle, give alms, study trade and usury. He was required to know the manner of sowing seeds and the good and bad qualities of a field. The *MBH* and the ***Puranas*** mention six distresses, *viz*—too much rain, drought, grasshoppers, mice birds and invasion from neighbouring kings. Agriculture during the age of the Buddha and the Mauryas was in a flourishing stage and much attention was paid towards the maintanance and development of forest under a Superintendent.

In the early period, cultivators were not regarded as inferior members of the community. In the Buddhist period agriculture and trade were reserved for the Vaisyas. Narad admonishes the king not to upset the two fundamentals of peasant's life—his house and the field. The Buddhist *Samgha* would ordinarily arrange to have the cultivation of its land undertaken by the professional peasants on the basis of the sharing of the produce. The *Samgha* would sometimes prefer to stock seeds which would be borrowed to be sown on land owned by private persons on the same terms of division of produce between the two parties. According to the *Vinava* texts, when a cornfield is cultivated by the *Samgha*, a share in the produce is to be given to monasticastic servants by whom the actual tilling has been done. Every produce should be divided into six parts—1/6 should be levied by the *Samgha*, the *Samgha* has to provide with bulls as well as the land for cultivation.

The state encouraged farmers to cultivate virgin and forest lands. The *Milindapanha* and Manu put forward the idea that those who clear the forest lands and prepare the plot of land for cultivation will be granted ownership. Various types of soil are listed in the *Amarakosa*. Periplus refers to the export of wheat and rice. Special emphasis is laid on the fact that those who cultivated and irrigated waste land were to be exempt from payment of taxes until such time asthey had made twice as much in profit as they had initially needed to invest. Agriculture was growing all round and that is confirmed by the landgrants of western India. A few foreign writers also throw light on agriculture. Theophrastus and Pliny deserve mention in this connection. They were acquainted with the list of agricultural products. We also get a list of agricultural products of north-western India from the *Chlenhanshu* (*History* of *the former Han dynasty*), Peach and Pear were imported from China duringthe reign of Kaniska. Agricultural techniques became more and more advanced. Kalidas refers to culivtion and stock breeding as vital sources of wealth.

According to Fahien,agriculture was the principal industry of the village, a fact supported by Hiuentsang who says that government dues were paid in kind ,and Kashmir government paid its servants in kinds. According to Hiuentsang, magadhan rice was rice for the great. By the time of Hiuentsang, both agriculture and cattlebreeding had ceased to be the occupation of the vaisyas and had now become the occupation of the sudras. The ploughing of land was looked down upon as sinful and as such it was left in the hands of the sudras.

Agriculture was the basis of economic life during the Gupta period. In the Gupta records there are frequent references to the purchase of waste lands. There was a great demand for land.

habitation and cultivation. The cultivable and uncultivable waste land was gradually brought under plough. Narad recommends that when the owner of the field is unable to cultivate his land, any stranger who undertakes it for cultivation unchecked by the owners or others, should be allowed to keep the produce. Land was not allowed to remain fallow for an indefinite period and for encouragement of agriculture king granted large areas of cultivated lands—some of these were donated free of royal revenue. According to Kalidas even the *Rsis* utilised lands for agriculture for their own maintenance in and around the *asramas*. The establishment of irrigation works gave a further impetus to the growth of agaiculture.

The period is marked by further advance in agriculture. New plots were cleared, swamps were drained and agriculture came to assume more and more importance. The state encouraged cultivators to cultivate virgin and foreign lands. The *Amarakosa* lists various types of soil suitable for the cultivation of rice, wheat, barley and sesame. Rice was grown in abundance. The south was well known for pepper and spices and the region as a whole is referred to as the land of pepper. Farmer brought two or three harvests every year. In later treatises special exemptions have been given to those who cultivated and irrigated waste land. New crops appeared in India from overseas. Agricultural techniques also became more and more advanced. Plough continued to be the main tool and both Brhspati and Amarasimha have given a detailed description of the plough. Axe, sickles and hoes of new types came to be used. Harvesting and threshing came to be done in developed and refined manner. The coconut plantations were set-up first in the second century A. D. Horticulture made rapid strides and irrigation was also developed. By this time, we have detailed information about duality of soils and plant diseases etc.

The agricultural fields were fenced and fines were prescribed for destroying cornsand grains. Holdings were normally small in the Gupta period but in the larger holdings the owners engagd hired labourers for their cultivation or let the lands to the share-cropper. Narad and Brhaspati lay down rules for the big land-holders and hired labourers. Among the three kinds of hired servant, soldiers and the porters, the agriculturists formed the middlemost class. Brhaspati classifies agricultural servants in the categories of low, middle, and high according to their grain share or pay and says that a third or the fifth of the produce shall be awarded to the cultivator of the soil as his share. The Gupta rulers gave encouragement to cultivation of waste land by selling them to individual on liberal terms. Narad provides that if the land is kept fallow by the owners for any reason, it should be cultivated by others. The purpose was to increase and maintain production. He further enjoins that whoever destroys or disfigures roots, fruits, water or the like or even the agricultural implements should be treated as guilty of committing an act of *Sahasa* or robbery. Land was considered a valuable piece of property.

Types of land and processes of Agriculture. : Land was the mainstay of a large section of the people. Its division into different types is noted in the inscriptions and literature—*viz.*—

(i) *Kristha* or *Ksetra* (cultivated)
(ii) *Akristha* or *Usara* (barren or uncultivated)
(iii) *Kedara* (fields already sown or under water)
(iv) *Gochara* or *Vivata* (pasture)
(v) *Arama* (meant for the groves)
(vi) *Sthala* (high or grounds)
(vii) *Shanda* (plantation of fruits)
(viii) *Mulavapa* (fields for growing roots, like ginger, turmeric etc.)
(ix) *Vana* (sugarcane plantation)
(x) *Vana* (forest)
(xi) *Pathi* (area covered by roads)

Agricultural proceses from the preparation of land for sowing to the ripening or reaping of corns followed by storage of grains are described in the literary sources. The *Milindapanha* minutely describes the entire agricultultural operations. The arable land was made fit, this was followed by sowing, irrigation, fencing, watching, reaping and finally threshing. Patanjali provides a similar description of stumps in the ground being weeded out by a hoe named *Sthambana*. Fields are classified as *Prasthikam*, *Draunikam*, and *Kharikam* requiring one *prastha*, drona or *Khari* weight of seeds. Sowing was done on an auspicious day. The seeds were supplied with water through canals which were given several names like *kulva*, *pranali* and *matika*. The Vedic term *khanimitra* is construed to mean artificial canals for diverting the water lifted from the wells. Fence, snare and field watchmen guarded the *khetta* or *ksetra* from birds and beasts. The Greek writers refer to a system of collective farming.

Agriculturists took steps to protect their crops. A scare crow of straw (*Chanchabhirupah*) was placed in the field to frighten the crows and birds. There were also dangers from moles, locust, hawk and others. The reaping was done with a sickle. The peasant proprietors had their organisation with *Bhojaka* as their headman. The *Smritis* prescribe a heavy fine as penalty for destroying or otherwise injuring agricultural implements, dams, roots, fruits, flowers, and also for obstructing the flow of waters Cultivators neglecting fields were fined while persons turning fallow into arable lands were rewarded. By the 9th Century A.D., an element of mechanisation seems to have crept in with the use of *Yantra* for crushing sugarcane.

Cattle rearing : Farmers needed cattle and cattle rearing formed an important avocation of the farmers. They were known as *Gopa* or *Gopalika* in the enrly period. Cow's stables were known as *Salas* and we have references to *Dohaka*, (milkman), *manthaka* (churner), *hunters* (*lubhadhaka*) and persons incharge of buffaloes The cattle farms reared calves, steers, drought oxen, stud bulls and buffaloes etc. Wild cattle were tamed. Importance of cattle breeding is also emphasised in the *MBH* from which we learn that cattle breeding was a regular feature. Cowboys and herdmen were paid in kind. Veterinary science also seems to have developed.

Agricultural Products. : Among the crops, vegetables and fruits were rice of different varieties, *kodrava* (coarse grain), *tila* (*sesamum*), *Priyangu* (pepper or saffron), pulses like *mudga*, *masa*,*masura*, *kulatha*, and grains like *yava*, *godhuma* (wheat), vegetables like *Saka*, *mula*, *plantains*, pumpkins, gourds, fruits like grapes, sugarcane etc, and other grains liks *Kalaya*, *atsi*, *sursap* (mustard etc.), Varieties of rices were known as *sali*, *vrihi*; *tandula*, *mahavrihi*, etc. Patanjali praises the *sali* rice of Magadha.

Susruta mentions *Mahasali* and Hiuentsang also refers to this variety of Magadha rice. This was used by the upper strata of society. Hiuentsang was entertained with this rice at Nalanda. Panini makes mention of *hayana, shastika* and *Nivara* varieties of rice. Millet. grams, peas, beans etc. are also mentioned. Cotton, linen, silk, hemp etc. were also produced. Madhavakara (born at *Silahrda* or Vateswara in Eastern India) of the 9th Century A. D. and the famous author of *Nidana*, has given a comprehensive idea of the diflerent agricultral products in his *Paryayaratnamala* (*PUJ-II*) and which has been quoted by Sarvananda of the 12th Century A. D. Hemachandra mentions seventeen varieties of grains. Apararka regards Magadha as rich in rice. The *Manasollasa* speaks of the virtue of rice growing in Kalinga.

Economic inequality. : In the agricultural sector land economy was expected to make the people self-sufficient. Rural economy had its centre in the village. The landless labourer ranked below the slave. The spectacle of sturdy peasants leaving at home their own empty barns and toiling as hirelings on the estate of royal capitalists is deplored as a symptom of social decadence arising out of the prevailing economic inequality. Forced labour hardly left any incentive for the poor and destitute farmers to raise their production. Large holdings of land were not unknown and we have references to one thousand *karishas* of land being farmed by brahmanas and also of a large farm requiring as many as five hundred ploughs for cultivation and also a host of hired labourers.

Taxes on agriculture. : Kautilyan state control formed a special feature of the economic system and the state levied various kinds of taxes on agriculture...a variety of impositions included tithe on raw produce, forced labour, special levy on produce for state granaries against emergencies like war or famine and occasional contribution to the king. The taxes on agriculture included—

(i) *Bhaga* (State's share of produce)
(ii) *Bali* (an undefined cess over and above *Bhaga*)
(iii) *Kara* (a tax on property levied periodically)
(iv) *Vivita* (levy on pastures)
(v) *Rajju* (cess payable for survey and settlement)
and (vi) *Chorarajju* (Police cess)

According to Manu and Yajnavalkya, prices of commodities should be fixed by the King. Manu stands for official stamping of weights and measures and their periodical inspection. This is not found in Narad and Katyayan and this is an index of strong reaction against the policy of administrative centralisation. The references to rationing in Kautilya to ensure equitable distribution of foodgrains suggests a planned economy.

II

Cattle breeding :—

Cattle breeding was one of the important branches of economic life in ancient India. The Vedic aryans lived long with their flocks and the reference to *Duhitar* (as daughter) and *mahisi* (as concert) is indicative of this fact. The protector of cattle or cow is *Gopa*, the assembly of the tribe is known as *Gosthi* and the desire for more and more cows led to a feud which is known as *Gavtsthi*. Cows, horses, buffaloes, sheeps, goats etc. are mentioned in the Vedic literature and gods are invoked to protect and feed the cattle, to increase the herd (*prajapasavah*) and to make the cows full of milk and satisfy the horses and to protect them from misfortune. Cow's milk (*kshira*) was one of the chief articles of food. Oxen were used for ploughing or drawing the wagons. Draught oxen were castrated. Horns were sharpened and decked with ornaments. Cows were taken to the pasture by the cowherds and they were kept in stalls. '*Vraja*' meant feeding ground for cattle. Marks were made on cattle to distinguish ownership. The main utility of sheep was in their wool. Pushan is said to weave raiment from the wool of sheep. Dogs were employed for guarding field and houses.

Cattle breeding was a regular profession in the epic and Sahdeva was a cowherd under Virata. Nakula acted as a horse keeper. Narad's question regarding elephant-*sutra*, horse-*sutra* and *ratha sutra* is indicative of the fact that due importance was attached to the scientific rearing of cattle or animals. It is said that "Kine are always the root of prosperity". According to Manu a strip of land should be set apart for pasturage and such areas should also have been reserved at the outskirt of a town or a city. The keeper of the cattle was answerable for all sorts of mishaps, death, damage and stealing etc.

The pasturage was to be fixed in the neighbourhood of a village. There were pastures of herds of cattle, of goats, of herds belonging to the kings and commoners. Herdsmen used to remove troublous insects from cattle's bodies and used to keep the fire alive to drive out gnats. Herdsmen were generally known as *Gopalakas*. The ox was indispensable from the standpoint of agriculture and was equally important in the conduct of transport and other conveyances. Horses and elephants were very useful to the government and aristocracy.

Kautilya mentins special departments for the welfare of cattle and animals and there were six officers or superintendents for the purpose, *vix*,—

(i) Superintendent of cows, (ii) Superintendent of pastures, (iii) Superintendent of elephants. (iv) Superintendent of forests, (v) Superintendent of horses, and (vi) game keeper.

The officer concerned had to keep a register of cattle, to mark all the cattle including the unclaimed and stray ones, to register the branded marks and had to make a special note of the missing animals. These superintendents appointed various types of servants under them to look after the different branches of work. Their services were engaged on various terms like—

(v) *Vetanapratigrahaka* (fixed wages)

(ii) *Karapratikara* (some *varakas* of clarified butter)

(iii) *Bhagnotasristikam* (a share in the dairy produce)

(iv) *Bhagnapravistaka* (Giving one-tenth of dairy produce)

The standard diet of the cattle was fixed by the government, Rules were also laid down for grazing, milching and churning of cows. The herdsmen were fined for cruel treatment of animals and medicines were applied to diseased animals. The herdsmen had to surrender the skin with the branded mark of a dead cow, buffalo, goat, sheep, ass, camel, etc.

The superintendent of pasture had to open new pasture grounds and their object was also the reclamation of waste lands. Different forests were assigned to different seasons for pasturage. Hunters were appointed to ensure the safety of the cattle. The superintendent of horse had to register details about all types of horses.

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The horses of Kamboja, Sindhu, Aratta, and Vanayu were considered best, those of Bahlik and Sauvira etc. of the middle quality and the rest ordinary. There were also veterinary surgeons to look after animals. A special superintendent was appointed for the training of elephants since it was thought that the efficiency of the army depended upon the efficiency of the elephants. The capture of elephants was, therefore, an important economic activity. The manner of hunting elephant is vividly described by Kautilya. The best elephants were imported from Kaling, Anga, Karush nd the east, those of middle quality came from Dasarna and Western countries Saurastra gave elephants of low qualities.

III

Irrigation

The development measures in the field of agriculture included all types of irrigational projects. It was the responsibility of the state to relieve the subjects from the distress caused by drought, flood and famine. Artificial irrigation is necessary in a country where people depended on rain. Since earliest times, Indian people have depended on one or the other type of irrigational devices. Irrigation tanks and canals were excavated. There were dams in the Indus Valley and canals as means of irrigation have been found at Lothal. *Ghatachakra* and *Asmacakra* of the Rigveda were probably the irrigating devices. Particular emphasis is on the lakes to keep cultivation independent of rain water and Kautilya rightly observes that irrigation works are the sources of crops. Hemadri emphasises merit accruing from the construction of a tank and further ext olls the construction of shades for distributing water to wells, reservoirs, canals and tanks etc. Allan recognises some of the symbol on early Andhra coins from Kolhapur as the waterwheels used for irrigation purposes, VRR Dikshitar has suggested that state afforded irrigation facilities for agricultural purposes,

State and Irrigation. : It was a normal feature in the Mauryan period. There was a regular class of officials to superintend and inspect the sluices by which water is let out from the main canals into their branches so that everyone may have an equal supply of it. According to Strabo sluices were constructed to let out-water from the main canals into their branches. In the *Gathasaptasati*, reference is made to the water lifting machine called *Rahattaghadla*. The use of mechanised devices for irrigation was so popular that there developed many guilds of people working in the hydraullic engines known as *Odayamtrikas*. *Araghatta* is mentined in a number of inscriptions and it was a currentdriven waterlift, consisting of a series of earthenpots lashed to the periphery of a wheel revolving in a stream. This is an instance of the hydraullic skill of early irrigation engineers. According to a Jain source, Rsabhadtta is credited with having constructed wells and tanks in Karnatak, We have also traces of canals as a means of irrigation at Nagarjunikondai.

Irrigation was considered vital for agricultural purposes and and the state took precautionary steps to safeguard the rights of the farmer to use them even if the irrigrtion canal lay in other's field (EI-XIII.212 ff.). At one place it has been suggested that the use of water course and tank required the prevlous permission of the state authority (EI-III. 127 ff.). Causing damage to irrigational projects was considered to be a great crime. According to Kautilya, a person who breaks the dam should be drowned (AS-IV. II). Manu's prescription is similar and he also prescribes fines. He advises remission of irrigation tax for five years in ease a man construots tank, lakes etc., and for four years and three years, when one repairs a neglected or ruined works or improves, extends or restores, for two years in case of acquiring such newly started works, by mort-gage or purchase. There is reference to large tanks, reservoirs etc, in inscriptions at Taxila, Mathura and other places.

The rulers and ministers were alive to their responsibility towards the irrigation of land under their control. We learn from the *Hathigumpha Inscription* of Kharavela that in the time of a ruler of the Nanda dynasty a canal was opened in Toshalinagar and the state had to maintain and repair that. The *Junagadh Inscription* of Rudradamana seems to suggest that the irrigation works were commonly executed by the state through the imposition of taxes, forced labour and emergency levies on the princes.

The Sudarshan lake, referred to in the *Junagadh Inscription* of Rudradamana was constructed earlier by *Rastriya* Pushyagupa in the time of Chandragupta Maurya, restored and adorned by irrigational canals by Yavanaraj Tusashpa in thereign of Asoka and was repaired by Rudradamana without resorting to forced labour by defying ministerial opposition. It was repaired under the supervision of Suvisakha. Under Skandagupta, his governor Chakrapalita rebuilt the dam. Skandagupta paid immediate attention to this problem. It was made stronger and furnished with natural dam, well planned conduits, drains and means to guard against foul water. In the post-Gupta and early medieval period, royal interest in irrigation activities declined. Even the rulers like Harsa of Kashmir, Siddharaj Jaisimha Chalukya of Gujerat and Karna took active intererest in irrigational activities. The king is advised in the *Aparajitaprchcha* (p. 187) to improve the means of irrigation in order to escape the dreaful consequences of famine resulting from drought.

The absence of irrigation tanks in later period suggests that the state ceased to bear the main responsibility. We learn that Kadamba King Ravivarmana caused a tank-bund to be constructed (EI-XXXI. 217 ff). Ganga King Devendravarmana granted a *hala* of land including the water course to a Brahmana when the state responsibillity ceased, Whatever irrigation measures were taken up was accomplished through occasional levies. Kalhana refers to restoration and repair of dams. Kashmir was saved by the great engineering operation of *Suyya* under the patronage of Avantivarmana and large tracts of land were made available for cultivation and price of rice came down (*RT*-V. 68-121, *EI*-XXX. 72).

For the improvement of agriculture there was elaborate system of irrigation. As early as the Vedic period we come across a term *Khanitrima* construed to mean artificial canals for diverting the water lifted from the wells. Wells, tanks, ponds were made available for irrigation. The *Rigveda* contains a reference to the water of wells being used for watering the fields and in this connection we have repeated mention of the word *Avata* (meaning a well). Muir took the word '*kulya*' to mean artificial waterways. There is a reference to canal digging in the *Atharvaveda* and *Kausikasutra* gives us the practical part of it. Irrigation by water raised from tanks and rivers was very popular. There were means of raising waters also by contrivances worked by wind

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power on windmills. Kautilya mentions the irrigational works (*setubandha*).

The importance of irrigation was recognised early by the Indian agriculturists. The Buddhist sources reveal that there were three engineers who constructed canals for watering the field (*Therigatha*-19, 877). There is also reference to various little embanked squares for water. The *Sakyas* and the *Koliyas* had made a dam on river Rohini. Irrigation tanks known as *Cheruvo* or *Keri* are mentioned in south Indian inscripstions and so also the cess levied on the people for their maintenance. According to the *Aparajitaprchchha* (p. 188) the usual means of irrigation were tanks and rivers, wells. machine wells, *arahatta*, river dams, lakes etc. *Arahatta* or *Araghatta* are mentioned in a number of inscriptions. The mention of this word in the literary sources from 8th Century A. D. onwards and also in the inscriptions of Gujerat and Rajastian tends to reveal that gradually technical efficiency in irrigation had increased. It is interesting to find a reference to the Persian wheel (*Araghatta*) in a record of the Pratihara period (10-th Century A. D.) being used for irrigation. *Arahattiyanara* (who drove the *arhatta*) is mentioned as representing a type of agricultural labourer (*Akhyanakrmanikosa*). Laksmidhara brought under *dana* (gift) the high level reservoir of irrigation. Great merit is attached to the gift of the knowledge of agriculture, A man reaps the merit of an *agnihotra* in whose tank water is held in rainy reason.

Rainfall—Varahamihira's *Brhatsamhita* gives numerous references to rains and rainfalls, forecast of excessive and scanty rainfalls, in the light of astronomical and meterological data as well as observation of omen and portents. All these go to show that agriculture continued on traditional lines Varahmihira refers to a standard rain gauge.

Meteorology—Kautilya has referred to the system of meteorology—a term used in connection with the empirical knowledge of the condition of rain. The people had some sort of knowledge of this problem. A vessel with a mouth (*aratni*) wide was used as a rain gauge and one such vessel was placed before before the store house. One way in which they tried to forecast

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the possible rainfall in a year was the observation of planets. A forecast of such rainfall can be made by observing the position, motion, pregnancy of the jupiter, rising and setting and motion of the venus; and the natural or the unnatural aspect of the sun. From the sun, the sprouting of the seeds can be inferred; from the position of the jupiter, the formation of the grains can be inferred and from the movement of the venus, rainfall can be inferred. Rainfall was never even all over the country. Sixteen *dronas* were normal rainfall in desert countries, half as much more in moist countries, thirteen and half *dronas* in the country of Asmakas (Maharastra), twentythree *dronas* in Avanti, and in immense quantities in western countries (Konkan), the borders of the Himalayas and the countries where the water channels are made use of in agriculture. The rainfall is considered very even when one-third of the requisite quantity of rainfall both during the beginning and the end of the rainy season and two-third in the middle. The reaping of good harvest is absolutely certain where rain, free from wind and unmingled with sunshine, falls so as to render three turns of ploughing possible. It never yieldeth crops without rain and hence irrigation is a necessity in agricultural operation. Agriculture depended upon good rainfall, favourable climatic conditions and also on irrigational facilities.

Irrigation Rates : Water rates varied according to the modes of irrigation by some mechanical contrivance or irrigation by water raised from tanks and wells. Kautilya mentions charge on the irrigated lands. The assessment varied according to the kind and method of irrigation although a uniform rate of one-fourth of the produce was the state's levy for lands irrigated by rivers, lakes, tanks and wells. Winter and summer crops were grown according to the supply of water available for irrigation. We have a reference to a guild of hydraullic engineers (*audayantrikas*) as early as the first century A.D. The cultivators paid irrigation tax (*bidakabhagam*) varying from one-third to one-fifth. *Dasabandha* was a deduction of onetenth of the revenue on account of the compensation for some public works as construction of a tank etc, (Wilson, H.H., *Glossary* -P, 127 ff).

IV

Famine :—

The fertility of soil, the spread of irrigation works, the presence of big rivers, the institution of two harvests annually, and immunity of the agricultural class from military ravages accounted for the comparative freedom which India enjoyed during the early period of her economic history. But drought and famines were not unknown. The Buddhist literature mentions famine and the measures taken by the ruler to meet the situation. The following three types are mentioned:—

(i) *Chanchu*—People were kept alive on grain collected in a box for the pacification of the dead.

(ii) *Svetashthl*—bones were boiled and soup was drunk by the people.

(iii) *Salakavritti*—people collected grains and molasses deposited in holes with sticks and boiling these prepared a soup for drinking.

Famine was there not only due to the absence of rains but also due to the destruction of corns or crops by locusts, hailstorms or other natural calamities. The peasants took measures by digging pitfalls, fixing stakes and setting stone traps and plant snares for killing the creatures that devour their crops. References to famines are found in the Vedic literature, in the *Ramayana* where we read of a famine inthe kingdom of Anga. There is a reference to drought lasting for twelve years in the *MBH* resulting in the heaps of bones everywhere. During such periods of scarcityall ordinary mora rules were suspended. The fact that the test of profession is open to all castes and *varnas* in adverse circumstances shows that such times were now and then experienced. Cases of *Ajagartah* (attempting to kill his son, Sunahapasena, to appease his hunger), Vamadeva (wishing to eat dog's flesh), Bhardwaja (of accepting a gift from a carpenter), Viswamitra (for having accepted dog's thigh flesh from the hands of a chandal etc.) may be cited as illustrations of such a situation. References to droughts and famines in different parts of the countries are known to us from the *Jatakas*. Famines in ancient India were treated not only as economic phenomenon but also ethical and was attributed to the dereliction of duty on the part of kings.

The rulers took all preventive as well as remedial measures against famines and natural calamities. An extensive system of irrigation, a mild and elastic system of revenue administration; an active encouragement of agriculture as well as arts and industries were sufficient in normal times to prevent the outbreak of famine. There was provision for the storage of grain as a safeguard against unexpected demands upon food reserves in times of distress. The state granted loans to the cultivators when they were hard pressed. The king is advised to behave leniently towards the Vaisya who increase the strength of the kingdom by improving agriculture. The conservation of forests rendered a great service to the cause of agricultural prosperity. During the famine, the king provided the people with seeds and other provisions.

(i) he may show favour by distributing his own wealth or the hoarded income of the rich.

(ii) seek help from his friendly states.

(iii) thinning the rich by exacting excessive revenue.

(iv) may emigrate with his subjects to another kingdom.

(v) may remove to the sea shore or to the banks of the rivers or the lakes. In 1054 A. D. the village of Alangundi suffered from famine and they had to shift themselves.

The scourge of famine has been viewed with great horror (IA-LIII.p. 192 ff). Famines and droughts brought tremendous loss and suffering to the people. Epigraphic and literary references to famines are available right from the days of the Mauryas. A vivid picture of the suffering of the people is found in the *Aparajitprchchha* (p. 187.) In a famine stricken region *dharma* declined and the sufferings of the people were hightened. Famine caused displacement of population also. The sufferings caused by famines had become a favourite theme among the Apabhramsa poets (*Hindi Kavyadhara 392*)

Elaborate measures were taken in Chandragupta Maurya's time for protecting the people from the ravages of famine. The king started relief work by giving work to famine stricken people, free distribution of alms, by raising funds and by taking help from others. This is further supported by two contemporary epigraphical records. (*JIH-1975*)

V

General Review of Agricultural Operation

The importance of monsoon in agricultural operation was the same in ancient Indian as it is today. Agriculture depended on timely rain. Prayer for timely rain is found in the Vedic literature. *Parjanya* is the god who forms in kines, in Mares, in plants of earth, and mankind, the germ of life. Maruts are requested to bring showers in the rainy season.

Due importance was attached to agriculture in ancient India and a gambler is called upon to go back to his field. The *Kinasha* or the cultivators spared no pains to making agricultural operations as successful as possible. *Vrika*, *Shira*, *Langala* were used for ploughs and the ploughshare was known as *Phala*. It was formerly made of *Khadira* wood and was later replaced by iron. Agricultural operations are mentioneds in the *Satpatha Brahmana* in the following order sowing, reaping, threshing, winnowing, measuring and storing up in granaries. Wishes are also expressed that the grain may not be smitten by lightening and by sun's rays.

Irrigation and manure were also used. Manures were used to fertilise the soil. Excrements seem to be utilised as manures and we find the Ribhus separating the dung from the other parts. Various kinds of manures were used by the farmers. Precise seasons for agricultural operations for different corns are also mentioned and indicated. Though two annual harvests are generally known, sometimes there were three harvest also. A farmer is advised to look to one's own field personally as any delegation of this work to others is ruinous. The forest was an essential adjunct of agricultural economy. It afforded villagers a ready supply of materials for house-building, material assistance in saving from starvation the cattle upon which all agricultural operations depended, supplied fuel, and the leaves of the forests acted as manures for cultivators' fields. Forests also served as sources of revenue and also supplipe materials for Ayurvedic preparations.

Exact boundaries of fields were fixed by trees like *Nyagrodha*, *Aswatha*, *Kimsuka*, *Shalmali*, *Sala*, *Tala* etc. and also by bamboo shrubs. Fields were required to be enclosed with a fence and according to Manu-"a land should be enclosed with a fence or enclosure over which a camel would not be able to see, and too dense to allow a dog or a hog to thrust its nose etc. snout into it." Measurement of field was also a common phenomenon. The organisation of a general cadastral survey was considered to be the prime requisite of a stable land revenue system. Kautilya has given a more detailed scale of measurement. He discusses the nature of various types of land for agricultural purposes and colonisation of the cultivated and uncultivated lands, the uncultivated tracts may be suitable for various kinds of agricultural operations and when it is fertile, it is still far better than a cultivated tract. There are descriptions of various agricultural process in the *Arthashastra*. The Superintendent of granary was expected to be well versed in agricultural processes and operations.

◆

CHAPTER–8

Industry and Labour

I

INDUSTRY

Right from the days of the Indus valley, India had both internal and external maritime trade with Babylonia, Assyria, Elam, Egypt and Arabia etc. The vedic society was sufficiently settled to admit of a high development in various arts and crafts and the products thereof led to trade. The *Panis* were a trading people and a flourishing trade presupposes on a flourishing industry. The merchants surrounded the sea. In the age of the *Brahmanas*, more striking is the great development of industrial art and consequent subdivision of occupations, viz.- *karmakara* (smith), *Kulala* (potter), *Ganaka*, *Gopala* (herdsmen), *Taksan* (carpenter), *vayitri* (weaver) etc. Various industrial professions are mentioned in the white *Yajurveda* and classes of artisans like jwellers, weapon makers, dentists, ect. are also mentioned in the *Ramayana*. It was in the age of the *Ramayana* that an instrument was invented for winnowing cotton and weaving industry was carried to perfection. Six distinct metals are mentioned in the white *Yajurveda*. Gold, Silver, Iron, lead, mercury, tin etc. are mentioned in the *Ramayana*. Mixed metals were also known.

India was the home of arts and crafts and her products found market throughout the world. Though every house was a centre of small industry, the pace of urbanisation favoured the concentration of industrial arts in the towns. It was as a result of urbanisation that several arts and crafts developed and made remarkable progress. Dionysius (C. 3rd Century A.D.) has given us a beautiful glimpse into Indian industries from a long range perspective in the following words - "The Indians on the other side of the Indus are variously occupied — —some by mining seek for the matrix of gold; digging the soil with well curved pickaxes; others ply the loom to weave textures of linen; others saw the tusks of elephants and varnish them to the brightness of silver; and others along the courses of mountain torrents search for precious stones— —the green beryl or the sparkling diamond or the pale green translucent Jasper, on the yellow

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stone, or the pure topaz, or the sweet amethyst which with a milder glow imitate the hue of people — —."

The specialisation of arts and crafts was promoted by several factors. The first is the knowledge and use of raw materials and the discovery of the tools. The artisans brought nature under technical device. The guild perpetuated the skill through the practices of heredity and apprenticeship. Due to the expansion of markets the traders had to face competition and had thus a greater incentive to improve. The traders, industrialists and businessmen had a sense of national consciousess and pride for they were anxious to promote exports and secure a favourable balance of trade from their foreign customers. *Sulka* (toll) was derived from the industrial profit. Collective enterprise, equitable distribution, and economic cooperation were the redeeming features of industries in ancient India. A large number of arts, crafts, occupations and professions are referred in literature and epigraphs and also in arts and suclptures. At the same time the evils of a thriving industrial life demanded interference of the State and Kautilya inaugurated a rigorous state control. The state also encouraged industries because it meant a rise in the revenue .

India had abundant mineral resources and her people knew well how to exploit them. Minerals included iron, copper, tin, lead, silver, gold, bronze, mercury, brass etc. Mines were mostly under the state monopoly and were worked by convict labour. The people were also conversant with the process of smelting and with chemical test of metallic substance. Industries were localised and the commonest and the most important in the village economy were the blackmiths. The smiths not only supplied tools to the cultivators but also armed the military. They received subsidy from the royal exchequer and were exempted from paying taxes.

There were villages of potters, woodworkers, iron smiths, jewellers etc. The wool and feather were used by the weavers for the production of woolen clothes. Ivory carving was an important industry. Pearl fishery was a flourishing industry in Ceylon and Tamil country. The treasures beneath the ocean are enumerated as *mukta* (pearl), *mani* (crystal), *veluriva* (beryl), *samkha* (shell), *sila* (quartz), *Praval* (coral), *rajata* (silver), *jatarupa* (gold), *lohitanka* (ruby), *masargalla* (cat's eye) etc. The tortoise shell was an important export. Pliny has referred to the flourishing pearl fishery industry. Perfumery was a highly specialised art and the commonest was sandal. Scents were extracted from sandals, flowers and many other varieties of aromatics were cultivated and exported. The art of embalming and preserving the dead was also known.

Gem industry reached a very high level of perfection in the post-Mauryan period. The sign of testing gems is recognised in the *Divyavadana* as a part of regular training for merchant's sons and included by Vatsyayana in the list of sixtyfour arts. The *Sangam* literature bears witness to the flourishing condition of the gem industry and the jweller's trade in south India. The skill of Indian gem cutter is exhibited in the surviving specimens of purely Indian art belonging to the Kusana and later periods.

Items of luxuries were many and all these were produced through various industries. Lac was widely cultivated and a flourishing lac industry thrived in ancient India. It was used mainly as a dye and for anointing the feet of women. Bee culture was also an important industry and so also a host of edible spices, herbs, medicines, stones, dyes, indigo etc.

Wood was plenty and was used on a large scale in house-building industry. The profession of a carpenter (*vardhaki*) was important as well as respected. Timber was used to build palaces and fortifications of which we have enough evidence from the ruins of Pataliputra. The carpenters took contracts for bedstead and other furniture in general. We have a reference to a brahmana carpenter (*Jataka*-IV.207). Chariot making and shipbuilding came within the purview of this industry. The architect was also interested in house-building industry. The stone cutters were experts in shaping stones and various archaeological discoveries in the country testify to the growth of this craft and industry. Pillars and bas reliefs were carved by them, excellent specimens of which have been discovered from Sanchi and other places. The architect, carpenter, stone cutter and painter were all parts of industries. Painting flourished as an independent art. Painter painted frescoes and they are treated in the *Silpasastras*. It is evident that all classes of art and industries associated with them were achieved by the people. Washermen, garland-makers, manufacturers of sugar, oil pressers, saltmakers, tailors, wood-cutters, grass-cutters etc. were also there.

Strabo speaks disparagingly not only about the mining activities but also about the industrial propensities of the Indians in general. He says—"They donot pursue accurate knowledge in any line, except that of medicine; in case of some arts, it is even accounted vicious to carry their study far, the art of war for instance." Presumably his authority derived the information from the priestly denunciation of all manual pursuits. Elsewhere he himself quotes Nearchos speaking of the remarkable ability and adaptability of the native craftsmen. The Indians saw the uses of Sponges by the Macedonians for the first time and they immediately adopted and manufactured imitations of them with fine thread and wool dying them with the same colour. The Indians quickly mastered the foreign ideas that commended. The metal industries were highly specialised and the *Kammara* was as comprehensive as smiths. *Vardhaki* covered all kinds of woodcrafts. Nearchos ascribes to Indians the art of manufacturing paper from cotton and according to Curtius the Indians at the time of Alexander used tender sides of the bark for writing.

Metal, Iron and Steel.

The mining and metal industries continued to flourish for centuries and the working in metal had attained high perfection in India. In the field of iron and steel, India had a particular way of carbonisation and Indian iron in general was of excellent purity. Easy availability of iron was one of the important factors in the early development of iron and steel industry in the country. The blacksmith (*Kammara*) occupied an important position among the artisans. We come across the description of his furnace and get references to his anvil and pincers. The description of the villages of blacksmiths consisting of a thousand families suggest that their craft was in a flourishing condition. The smiths made agricultural and household implements and also weapons for war. Production of war materials must have been considerably on a large scale and the industry, dealing in such productions, must have absorbed a good number of blacksmiths and their concentration near such industries is only natural. Iron was also used for improving means of transport and a sheath of iron, two inches wide, was put round the outer edge of the wheel to make it strong. Blacksmith art had attained specialisation. Arrow making was a separate craft. Delicate and strong needles were also manufactured.

The famous iron pillar at Mehrauli, a copper statue of Buddha from Sultnganj and various artistic bronze pieces from different parts of the country, the representation of metallic mirrors, copper seals at Rajghat, a colossal copper image of Buddha (attributed to Puranavarmana) and a brass temple which was then being built by king Siladitya (noticed by Hiuentsang) and beam found in the temples of Orissa and other places and the blades made of Indian steel in Damascus are sufficient to show that metal industry in ancient India had acquired high proficiency. Hieuntsang also refers to the working of mines and he says that brass was extensively produced in the country. According to Halayudha (A.D. 950) the important production centres of metal industry were :—

(i) Saurastra was noted for bell-metal
(ii) Vanga for tin
(iii) Rishika, Sopara, Vanga and Anga for sword
(iv) Tanjore for metal work and jewellery.

Mines were dug out for obtaining metal. Mining was an important industry and a State monopoly under the Mauryas. The Superintendent of Mines was incharge of this department. In the post-Mauryan period, we have only scantiest reference or information about the condition of mining and metallurgical industries. According to Pliny India had neither brass nor lead but exchanged precious stones and pearls for them. According to Periplus, the manufacture of Indian iron and steel was so advanced in quality and quantity that they were exported from Kathiaward to East Africa. Indian gold was almost as scarce as copper, tin and lead. The manufacture of metal was the subject of State regulation. Pearls and gems were also State monopolies.

The finest example of highly developed iron metallurgy is the Mehrauli pillar which after an exposure of more than fifteen centuries has not yet rusted. Art of bronze and copper casting was equally perfect and popular. Fashioning images in bronze was a flourishing industry. A remarkable copper statue of Buddha is symbolical of the metallurgical and artistic skill of the people of India. Hiuentsang refers to one gigantic copper colossus of Buddha, about eighty feet in height. Taranath refers to Dhiman anp

Vitpala having made several works of art in metal. Bronze industry had scaled great heights and had influenced the art of Java. Indian metal workers and foundry men were famed for their skill. Metal workers followed local traditions. In the *Milindapanha*, the working of gold, iron and tin is singled out from other crafts. Megasthenes has referred to metal ornaments and also to other types of activities connected with metal. Articles of utility, implements and accountrements of war were also made.

The *Charyapadas* have references about the industries. Temple structures of Bhubneshwar, Puri, Khajuraho, Konarak etc bear unmistakable evidence of the advancement of industries connected with iron, cement and other allied materials. Ksiraswami also makes a mention of a number of other industries. Bengal, Kamrupa, Magadha, Aparant, Kaling, Kasi, Vatsa, Gujerat, Paithan, and parts of south India were centres of various industries. Metallurgical progress was admirable. Iron came to be used for a variety of purposes. Iron beams were frequently used in the temples of Mathura and Konarak but the process of forging beams seems to have been known only to Orissa. Beams were forged and larger ones were produced by welding together a number of blooms of wrought iron by means of a hammer. Water vessels of irons are also mentioned. According to *Yuktikalpataru*, Benares Magadha, Nepal, Saurastra, and Kalinga had a reputation of producing swords. According to Sarangdhara, Rishik, Vanga, Surparka, Videha, Chedi, Sahasram and Kalinga were equally famous and so was Anga. Bhoja describes Anga swords as dirty and blunt but Sarangdhar (*Anthology*) praises Anga swords for sharpness, strength and excellent handles. Bhoja discusses the relative merit of different types of irons and also prescribes methods for the purification of iron.

Jwellers.

The art of jwellers seems to have been in advanced condition. The *Brhatsamhita* mentions twenty two jewels like diamond, sapphire, emerald, ruby, beryl, amethyst, crystal, moon-gem, topaz, conch-shell etc. Synonyms of all these are found in the *Amarakosa.* Vatsayana includes ratna in his list of sixtyfour arts. Varahamihira's list of eight sources of pearl contains the well known names of fisheries of Ceylon, Persia, and Pandya countrn. Jewels were also

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used as good omen. Jwellery was an important industry. We have a vivid picture of jwellers at work in a famous description of heroines, palace in *Mrchakatika*, a drama by Sudraka. Pearl industry was also flourishing. Pearls were also used for inlay works. The *Amarakosa* and the *Brhatsamhita* give a long list of names of pearl necklaces. Kautilya enumerates diamonds of several varieties the sources of which are attributed to Vidarbha, Kosala, Kasi and Kaling. Diamonds and precious stones were a speciality of the south. Craftsmen engaged in the canons of the rituals of the *Silpasatras* enjoyed a high social status. Most of the gems and precious stones were used for making ornaments and inlay works. Cutting gems and precious stones in various shapes and polishing them was a specialised art by itself and that setting them on ornaments was the work of the goldsmith. The *suvarnakaras* and *manikaras* were workers in precious metals and stones and they were connected with the industries. People were fond of ornaments and several types of ornaments were used and made. Trade in ornaments seems to have been extensive.

Textile Industry.

The Textile industry was highly developed. Cotton manufacture held the first place among the textile industries. The observation of Megasthenes that the main attraction of the fashionable grandees was on dress is borne out by the medallions and relief sculptures in Bharhut, Sanchi, Sarnath and Amravati. According to Megasthenes in contrast to the simplicity they observe in other matters, they love finery and ornament and wear dresses worked in gold, adorned with precious stones and also flowered robe with fine muslin. Sravasti, Kosambi, Rajagriha, Pataliputra, Vaisali, Champa, Kusinara, Mithila, and various other places manufrctured plenty of textile goods of high quality both for domestic and foreig market. Weaving was fairly common in society. Madurai, Aparanta, Kalinga, Kasi, Vanga, Vatsa, Mahisha, produced finest cotton fabrics. Kautilya distinguishes three varieties of *Dukula* from Vanga, Pundra and Suvarnakudya. Linen fabrics from Kasi, Pundra, Magadha and other places also find mention in various sources. Kautilya mentions *Kauseya* from Chinabhumi and describes woolen blankets from Nepal and various other varieties of clothes. Blanket making was a specialised industry.

The Jain *Acharangasutra* (II.5.1.4 ff).mentions several varieties of cotton and fur stuff. The *Mahavagga* (I.30.4.) enumerates textile goods, viz. *Khomam* (Linen), *Kappasikam* (cotton), *Koseyam* (silk), *Kamblam* (woolen garments), *sanam* (hemp) and *bhangam* (hempen). We learn from the *Milindapanha* and the *Ramayana* that the spinning and weaving were two separate industries. There were many varieties of woolen stuff and the luxury goods included *gonaka* (goat's hair coverlets), *chittaka* (patch work counterparts of many clours), *Patika* (white blankets), *tulika* (quilt stuffed with cotton), *Uddalomi* (rugs with furs), *Koseyam* (silk coverlets), *Kuttakam* (long carpets) etc. Silk was the commonest luxury. Carpets were made of finest fibre cloth with soft and variegated squirrel's skins. There were many varieties of blankets and woolen stuffs, dyed, embroidered or spotted. Blankets were made also of human hair, horse's tail and of feather of owl. Blankets, fibrous garments, and cotton fabrics with their specialities and sources of supply figure in the *Arthashastra* as well as known industrial products (II.II).

The textile is one of the oldest industries of India. The art of manufacturing cotton by the use of spinning wheel and loom is an ancient art. *Tantu*, *Otu*, *Tasar*, *Mayukha*, *Tarku*, point to the perfection of weaving. It was developed on intensive and extensive basis. India was probably the first of all countries that perfected weaving and the art of of its gold brocades and filmy muslins. Its marvellously woven tissues and sumptuously inwrought apparel have been the immemorial glories of India. Panini refers to the weaver's (*Tantuvaya*), the place of weaving, the loom, the process of weaving and manufacture of textile goods. In textile industry north was leading against the south (As-VII.12). Benares and Bengal were the centres of textile industries aud were noted for their fine muslin. Kasi produced the best quality of cotton fabric

According to *Mahaparinibbanasutta*, the texture of the cotton fabric was so fine that it absorbed no oil. The Bengal weavers produced muslins of the finest variety which was exported. Vanga was the source of cotton fabrics and blankets. Blankets also came from the Bahlika country. Mahismati, Madura, Konkon, Kalinga, Vatsa etc. were also the chief centres of cotton fabrics. Ujjain was one of the chief centres of textile industries and from there the textile goods were exported. The *Abhiras* produced blankets of various qualities. The *MBH* suggests the preparation of costly skins and furs, a valued industry in the north-west of the Himalayas as well as in western India. The enumeration of textile fabrics in different sources is indicative of the fact that the industry persisted through the ages. Different kinds of textiles were produced in different parts of the country. Various kinds of umbrellas were also known. An inscription of king Trilochanapala of Gujerat (11th Century A. D.) refers to the dedication of an umbrella resplendant with gold and jewels to god Somnath by Vatsraj (King's father). There was a considerable difference between the dress of rich and the poor.

The textiles consisted of cotton, silk, wool, linen, as well as barks of trees. A close examination of the Ajanta Frescoes have revealed four distinct weaving techniques. Mathura produced a fine striped variety of cotton clothes, *Jattipattaka* (woven silk) and *chitrapata* (figured textile). Though there were innumerable thriving industries, the facts of specialisation and localisation stand out, for example, the muslin of Bengal, the pearl of Pandya and Ceylon, sandal of Mysore and Assam, the gold of Tibet and Garhwal, Malabar, Ceylon etc, the evidence are almost unimpeachable.

Leather Industry

There was flourishing leather industry. Leather casks were made for holding liquor or water. Leather guards were made for the hands of the archer. The art of tanning hides is referred to in the *Rigveda* and also in the *Satpathabhramana*. Shoes and boots were manufactured out of leather. The *Visnupurana* advise persons to be never without shoes. Arrian refers to the use of shoes by the Indians. Leather work was called *Charmanya*.

Mechanical Devices

In the present state of our knowledge, it is very difficult to say as to how the industry was mechanised. It cannot to denied that considerable progress in mechanical devices, applied to various industries, and that is evident from Kautilya (II. 18).

Mechanisation and heavy industries were deprecated by the orthodox class andcrafts associated with mining and factories were branded low. Very few handicrafts were exempt from stigma. The commentaries on the art of mechanical engineering or *mahayantra-pravartana* in Manu (XI. 64) are informative in this respect. It is evident that mechanical devices were called for the great irrigation projects, for armaments, techniques of warfare, machines needed for sugar pressing, oil-pressing, the water pump or hydraullic engines, for looms with shuttle and wheels and spokes etc. If the lion capital standing of Sarnath is a testimony to Mauryan craftsmanship, these are monuments of the mechanical development in ancient India without which the monoliths (estimated at about fifty tons) could not have been erected or transported to different places.

India has been an industrial country since the sixth century B. C. when the pace of urbanisation favoured the concentration and perfection of industrial art and specialisation in crafts. Whereas Kautilya discusses the details of the process of mining, Buddha mentions the blowing and heating of smiths. Smith's trade was divided and specialised on the basis of different metals. Luxury encouraged textile industries. One of the six boareds of the Patliputra municipal administration (the first board) looked after every thing relating to industrial art. The people of upper castes are never encouraged to accept craftsmanship as profession and this attitude had an adverse effect on industrial life. India had attained a name in dyeing industry and Indian dyeing had become proverbial in the Roman world.

Glass Industry

India was the greatest producer of costly gems. According to Coomarswamy India had attained highest standard in glass making even before the Mauryas. The technique of glass manufacture was known to the Indians and on the authority of Pliny it can be said that it was without any comparison. Coloured glasses were known to Kautilya. The *Mahavastu* mentions glass worker as *manikari*.

Salt Industry

Salt industry was a monopoly of the State under the Vakatakas.

Pottery :—Quite a lot of people earned their livelihood from the pottery industry. Utensils, terracotta figurines, leads and seals, etc. were made. Potters showed skill and efficiency in moulding, and designing. The terracotta figures were much in demand both for religious and secular purposes. Clay cart was also very popular.

Cottage Industry

Cottage industry played an important role in the national[1] economy. The different peoples have different tastes and they take up different professions in life. All professions were rceognised as valuable for social development. Description of artistic handicrafts and designs shows the perfection that the ancient cottage industries had acquired. Kautilya has shown a greater appreciation of the economic and social role of such crafts and has advocated the use of several methods for their organisation and development. He provides a good picture of the technical knowledge possessed by the artisans. There was state patronage to arts and crafts. State granted marketing facilities.

Carpentry

Carpentry had attained a considerably advanced specialised profession. The art had attained perfection to a great extent. There are various references to wealthy carpenters, timber merchants, making of chariot wheels, carving wood, and making of wooden buildings. The carpenters built houses and palaces. The extraordinary perfection of the craft in the Mauryan times is attested by the seven large and mysterious wooden pillars at Kumhrar (Patna) and at Jaimanlagadh (Begusarai). Wood architecture was common in the country. The Mauryan emperors had wooden palace. Prior to the introduction of stone architecture, wood was the most common. There are also references to ordinary houses of wood. There are also references to wooden palaces in the *Jatakas*. The *Maha-Umaga-Jataka* speaks of the building of the city ramparts of Mithila, restoration of old buildings and so on, for which carpenters were sent to forests for bringing the required timber on three hundred boats. Another *Jataka* gives a picturesque description of the work of carpenters in building industry. Carpenters also specialised in constructing boats, ships, carts, chariots of all kinds and machines. They also made furniture of various types. They worked with hatchet, chisel and mollet. They also made article for sacrificial purposes The carpenter played an important part in the rural cum urban economy.

Ivory Industry

We have seen that gold, pearls, gems and precious stones were used by the richer and upperstrata of people and industries connected with those articles were thriving. Ivory was also an important industry. There were good ivory experts in the country. It was obtained from forests. Tusks of living elephants were very valuable and this industry had given rise to a class of people whose profession was to collect tusks from forests. Ivory products of eastern India are also mentioned in the *MBH*. Ivory workers of Vidisa recorded their donation on agateway of Sanchi. Ivory was used for making hair combs, dice, various other small objects as well as ornamental sword hilts, armour and the like.

Stone Cutting

Stone cutting was another highly developed industry. One of the best specimens of the stone art is the massive stone coffer exhumed from the Piprawah Stupas (of the pre-Mauryan age) which contained a relic casket bearing a Brahmi inscription. Another casket of beryl from Bhattiprolu. of somewhat later date, constitutes the most beautiful example of stone cutters' art. The perfect execution of Asoka's inscriptions on stone, pillars and rocks is a tribute to the stone cutters.

Minor Industries.

Other industries included liquor distilling, sugar making, cane work, dyeing, garland making, perfumery, etc.

State and Industry.

The vast expansion of industry and cmomerce records the progress that the country had made in the past. People had specialised in different branches and there are references to new technical terms for worker's tool and methods of production. Special care was taken for the encouragement of industry because it increased state's assets. A strict control was maintained over the traders and industrial workers for the protection of public against various malpractices. The complete monopoly over mines and minerals assumed by the State was based upon the appreciation of the role of mines and minerals in national economy. The most complete development of the State industrial and commercial policy can be traced in Kautilya's *Arthashastra*.

Private Enterprise.

The Kautilyan state was engaged in the textile industry on a large scale. The *Sutradhvaksa* is to get yarn spun by women specially those without support. Their wages are to be fixed according to the quality of the yarn. There were to be separate factories for spinning and weaving. He also looked after the manufactures of ropes, straps useful for carts, chariots used in fighting services etc. Armours were manufactured in separate factories. The *Rathadhyaksa* is to get various kinds of chariots and carriages built. There does not seem to be much scope left for private enterprise in industry. What may be regarded as belonging to this sphere is the activity of some of the artisans and craftsmen, called *Karusasilpas*, employing a number of artisans to do the actual work for customers. Here the profit was kept by the master artisan. We have also reference to independent artisans known as *Svavittakarus* working with their own capital in their own shops.

Position of Industrial Works.

The State is expected to exercise control over the artisan's works. A tribunal is setup for setting industrial disputes concerned with artisan classes. The institution of commission was a measure taken by the State to deal with the problems of industrial labour, working mainly on tools, and in factories. Artisans and carpenters occupied a very humble position and those engaged in industrial work are very poor people. There is no intention of the state to improve their position either. The attention paid by Kautilya to industrial expansion and development for the purpose of increasing the financial resources of the State is not accompanied by the enunciation of a policy to advance the economic position of industrial labourers ,by raising the standard of their wages. He gave no thought to the mitigation of their hardships. He draws a distinction between the ordinary industrial labourer and highly skilled labourer—ordinary artisan is paid 120 *panas* per year while state carpenter is paid 2000 *panas* a year.

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The state workshops were set-up to meet the demand's both public and private. *Akaradhyaksa* was entrusted with overall control and supervision of all relevant operations of mines from start to finish, while the other *adhyaksas* (superintendents) with technical titles were required to deal with different branches of the mining industry and trade in minerals. Living by the manufactured products without a state licence was punishable. There were *Khanyadhyaksa*, *Lohadhyaksa* and *Lavanadhyaksa* charged severally, with their branches of industry. The duties of *Lavanadhyaksa* involved the complete control of the salt industry. The salt deposits were to be worked out by private parties on payment of royalty to the state. Importers of salt had to pay custom duty and a state license was necessary for salt industry. The gold industry was under the control of *Svarnadhyaksa* who exercised rigid control over the artisans. *Suradhyaksa* was incharge of the distilleries and breweries. India had a highly advanced stage of industrial life. The ***Yuktikalpataru*** of Bhoja contains an account of large number of industries in the early medieval period.

Role of the State.

The role of the State in the sphere of industry and trade was important. The foundation of markets, towns, in the rural areas, the making and maintenance of roads, and ensuring safety on them accepted as among the primary duties of the state. The intimate association of the industrial and commercial classes with the court becomes clear from the rules relating to the planned settlement of the fortified capital. The state's direct share in the extractive and manufacturing industries is evident from the different sources. The king prevented destruction on the trade and thereby facilitated industry. It was a part of the state policy to have strict control of artisans, traders and industrialists. Prices, wages and profits were regulated.

Modern features

The economic policy of the Mauryan state was aimed at a systematic control of the evils of a free competitive economy partly by direct participation in industry and trade and partly by bureaucratic paternalism. Some regulations regarding industry have modern features. The Superintendent of Commerce functioned like the modern controller of prices an hde fixed the price with due regard to its having been manufactured or imported from a distant country. It was laid down that whenever there was an excessive supply, the superintendent should centralise its sale. It is laid down that if the wealthy men of good manners are ruined in a business, the king should protect them. This is a notable instance of state intervention in industry.

Industry and the Problem of Labour :

We have seen above that in the age of the Mauryas, the state had a monopoly in a number of industries and most of them were nationalised industries. Since state was a major participant in the economic and industrial activities, Kautilya prescribed standard wages for all types of workers. The proper wage for weaving cotton cloth was the equivalent money worth of cotton. The wages for weaving silken or woolen clothes were equal to one and half times and twice the value of silk and wool, respectively. Wages were paid according to the value of the yarn. Separate rates were fixed for washing and dyeing. Wages were payable according to time and work and according to contract. Wages should be settled upon before the work was actually begun. Experts were called upon to determine the wages of washermen in cases of disputes. If the workers failed to perform the allotted work at the time and place desired by the employer, nothing was payable to him. Workers could be made to work on holidays by payment of special wages. Cowherds and agricultural labourers were paid fixed wages. Provisions and wages were given to artisans in proportion to the work done. Kautilya did not favour the employment of children. He also regulated the condition of women wage earners. A labourer could obtain leave of absence from work but if any person wanted to proceed on leave for any other reason, he would take leave by arranging a sub-stitute for himself. Labourers were also rewarded Kautilya believed that only satisfied labourers could produce more.

The industrial rules and laws were regulated by the State. While the State guaranteed regular payment, it also placed obligation to perform the work sincerely, failure or refusal was considered to be a crime. Employers were also liable punishment for failure to pay wages or for wrongly trying to throw the workers out of employment. Settlement of dispute was done on expeat's advice. The employees enjoyed sickness benefit, maternity, old age benefit and pension. Those who died in harness were compensated by the State. The labourers could freely enter into contracts as to their work and wages and were guided by the rules and codes of regulations laid down by the state. The worker had to make good any loss or damage caused by his fault. Guild was the primordial unit of the socio-economic organisation. The labourers were entitled to promised wages and if no fixation was properly done they would be paid in proportion to work done and time spent over it. The wages of artisans, musicians, physicians, would be the same as similar persons would get elsewhere or as decided by experts.

II

Labour

There was a saying in ancient India that there was no taste without sweat and no rest without labour. The saying appears to be perfectly correct. Carlyle once said—"All work is noble, work alone is noble". Vedic hymns sing in praise of labour because victory and hard work go together. The so-called *Varnasrama* was also aimed at a division of labour. The ever increasing wants of society gave rise to different crafts and occupations and the advantages of a division of labour became apparent. There was no stigma attached to any profession in the beginning. Apart from crafts and professions there were landless poor, the servile classes became workmen engaged in lower crafts. Various occupations are mentioned in the Vedic literature.

The important occupations included—

(i) priestly occupation (*Purohita.*)
(ii) astrologer (*Ganaka*) also (*Naksatadarsa*)
(iii) Physician (*Bhisaka*)
(iv) Ploughmen (*Kinasa* or *Krisbala*)
(v) herdsmen (*Gopa* or *Gopalaka*)
(vi) goat herd (*Avipata* or *Ajapata*)
(vii) herdsmen (*Pasupa*)
(viii) employed in husking (*Dhanyakuta*)
(ix) Smith (*Karmakara*)
(x) Smelter (*Dhimamtr*)
(xi) Potter (*Kulal*) also (*Mrtipacha*)

(xii) Maker of arrows (*Isukara*)
(xiii) bow maker (*Dhanuskara*)
(xiv) Carpenter (*Taksan*)
(xv) Stone carver (*Prakaritr*)
(xvi) chariot builder (*Rathakar*)
(xvii) Rope maker (*Rajjuka*)
(xviii) Wine distiller (*Surakar*)

Besides these there were—

(i) Barbers, (ii) washermen, (iii) gatherer of wood, (iv) fishermen, (v) hunter, (vi) Kaibarta, (vii) drum beater, (viii) servants, (ix) menials, (x) bath attendants, and (xi) shampooers, (xii) dress maker, (xiii) lute player, (xiv) acrobat and (xv) hand clapper etc.

All these were classed as menial workers. Labour in the Vedic period was not wholly servile. The position gradually changed in no time with the emergence of slaves in the socisty.

According to the *Upasakadasasutra* (a Jain work) the following professions were impure and need not be adopted by the Jainas—

(i) Trading in coal, (ii) cutting wood, (iii) driving a bullock cart, pack horses or mules, (iv) tilling the land, (v) selling butter, ghee, oil, etc., (vi) trading in elephant tusks, (vii) manufacturing shellac, (viii) selling poisons, (ix) trading in hair, (x) manufacturing sugar etc., (xi) branding cattle, (xii) clearing forest and jungles, (xiii) draining marshes and low lands, (xiv) keeping wild animals for sale. Kautilya considered *Karu* impure.

There are references in the *MBH* to suggest the importance of scientific distribution of work among different individuals in accordance with their capacity to work. Panini also refers to skilled and unskilled labourers—*silpinas* and *karmakaras* and their work and the wages differed according to the nature of the work assigned on the basis of their talents. The *karmakaras* or labourers were to be found in various spheres of production and their number swelled at the time of sowing and gathering crops. They were to be found in villages and towns. They did not possess any means of production and hired themselves out for wages or in return for food. The mobility of labour was there in the beginning and we find that in a family, one was composer of hymns, his father a physician, and mother grinder of corn or grain (*RV*—IX. 112.3.).

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Kautilya has referred to the organisation of workers as guilds of workmen and has laid down rules for their regulation.

In economic sphere all castes seem to have stayed together and there was mobility in social sphere. The freedom of initiative and mobility in trade and labour finds exemplification in the enterprise of a settlement of wood workers (*Jataka* IV. 159). In the beginning the division of caste was not so rigid and was no bar to the mobility of labour both vertical and horizontal. Social divisions and economic occupations were very far from coinciding. The *Rigveda* records instances of *sudra* kings and we have an example of Kavasha, Javala, the founder of a school of *Yajurveda*, *Valmiki* and many others belonged to the category of Sudras. *Apastamba Sutra* (II. 5. 10) is indicative of the fact that Sudra woman can become a Brahmana and a Brahmana can become a Sudra according to their good or bad deeds. According to *Vasistha* (II, 24 ff) with certain restrictions a priest or warrior may support life by trade and agriculture. In the age of Buddha, the pursuit of agriculture was associated neither with social prestige nor with social stigma. In the later period a person born to a professional caste habitually stuck to it throughout his life and the normal feature in social life was immobility of labour from one profession to another.

So long as there existed the freedom of movement from one profession or occupation to other, that led to the dignity of labour. In the Vedic period, the *Rathakaras* had a place of honour. Vedic *Rishis* themselves prepared sacrificial posts. But gradually the situation changed and with the accumulation of wealth in the hands of few there grew a class of millionaires who hired labourers (*Jataka*-I. 408). Life was harder for such workers. Kasi Bhardwaj had five hundred ploughs and he hired men for agricultural purposes. The great complexity of caste system and the beginning of the association of caste with craft is ascribed to the age of the Mauryas.

In Kautilya, the status of artisan was high. Every caste and craft had a locality of its own (*AS*-II.4). Agricultural labourers were not held in high esteem and the condition of mine labourer was also not satisfactory. In the Andhra Kusana period, labour was mobile. The *Manimekhalai* (canto-IX) tells us that in the building of the royal palace, skilled artisans of Magadha, mechanics from Maharastra, smiths from **Avanti**, **carpenters** from **Yavana** countries worked with Tamil citizens. **Canto XVIII** refers to a beautiful temple built by the Gurjaras. Both the private individuals and the government employed various categories of labourers including those engaged in manufacturing arms and ammunitions, tools and equipments, darpenters, builders, blacksmiths, agricultural workers etc.

Sukra's view on wage

Sukra has laid down rules for the fixation of wage and labour. He has propounded the theory of minimum or living or fair wage by guaranteeing a minimum for every class of worker. He has also suggested that the wages must be according to the ability of the workers. The employees should never be insulted by the master. He has prescribed paid holiday, medical leave, pension compensation etc. Manu stands for punishments to be imposed on those employees who do not carry out the work agreed upon. One who does not fulfil the contract should be fined and should not be paid any wage.

Kautilya

Kautilya recognises the contractual basis of employee-employer relation. As to wages not previously fixed, the amount shall be fixed in proportion to the work done and time spent in doing it at the rate prevailing at that time. Artisans, musicians, physicians, buffoons, cooks, and other workmen, serving of their own accord, shall obtain as much wages as similar persons employed elsewhere usually get or as much as experts shall fix. Kautilya also prescribes a scale of fine for neglect of work, meant both for the employee and the employer. Disputes regarding wage shall be decided upon the strength of evidences furnished by witnesses (*AS*-III.4).

Several references in the *MBH* suggest the importance of scientific distribution of work among different individuals in accordance with their capacity to work. According to Kautilya, the guild of workmen could have a grace of seven nights over and above the period agreed upon for fulfilling their engagements. Guilds of workmen were to divide their earnings either equally or as agreed upon. The law-givers recognised the essential sanctity of all work.

Artisan.

The artisan was a part of ancient Indian society. He was interwoven in the very texture of village life and was given some share of agricultural produce on a rent-free piece of land. In a city his position was fairly dignified. The way in which the artisan was rewarded here brought about a happy combination of agriculture and industry. The artisan rose to the position of a considerable status and dignity in his area and master in his own house. The payment was either in kind or in grant of land besides perquisites on all special occasions.

In fixing wages, terms of contracts were binding on both sides. Wages may be paid either at the commencement or at the middle or at the end of the work as agreed upon. It was incumbent upon the labourers to take due care of the implements entrusted to them. The basis of the obligation rests upon the reciprocal alliance caused by the agreement. The interest of both sides was safeguarded by the state. Big merchants and landowners hired a large number of people.

Concept of Wage.

In the Vedic period though the idea of currency was there, its use was not very common. The daily transactions were carried through barter system and the labourers were paid in kind. In the Buddhist period, the system of barter as well as the use of metal coins went side by side. People were obliged to work for wages. Technical hands were sometimes given high wages. Wages of ordinary labourers were very low. A Jain work classifies wage earners into the following types :—

(i) those who were given the daily wages *(divasabhayaga)*

(ii) those who were specifically engaged for journey *(jattabhayaga)*

(iii) those who were employed on contract to perform the entire work *(Uchattabhayaga.)*

(iv) those who were employed for the day only.

The man who insisted on wages was called *Vaitanika.* Panini mentioned skilled and unskilled labourers who earned their livelihood by manufacturing various articles. Katyayana refers to cash payments made to workers. Patanjali refers to the monthly wages of labourers. Kautilya regulated the wages of the employees or the labourers. He prescribed standard wages for all types of workers. Workers would be made to work on holidays by payment of special wages. Conditions of women wage earners were also regulated. The labourers were also rewarded for turning out a greater quantity of quality work. Employers were liable to punishment for failures to pay proper wages. The employees enjoyed various benefits. The labourers could freely enter into contracts as to their work and wages and they were guided by the rules and regulations laid down by the State.

The average pay of an unskilled labourer was one *pana* a day whereas the skilled workers received six *panas*. One *pana* a day was an established rate of wage or the minimum wage of a day labourer. A water carrier was given half a copper *pana* a day and the same wage was paid to a female labourer. One silver *masaka* was enough to provide two persons with food and that was the daily earning of a grass cutter. The wage of door keepers, street watchmen and sweepers were approximately two thirds of a cooper pana a day. In a fifth century A.D. a day labourer was paid from half to one copper pana per day or on the average two-thirds of a copper pana. Prannath has worked out the rise of prices between the fifth and the eleventh century A.D. and has proved that price of food stuffs rose seven and quarter times. According to an inscription connected with a *mahavihara*, Amarakaradava, son of Udana, gave twentyfive *dinaras* in order to provide daily meals for ten monks and oil for two perpetual lamps. Standard of comfort among the labouring classes was very low.

According to Kautilya serfs, slaves and landless labourers working for the king were provided with food and clothes in lieu of wages and were given the petty sum of one and quarter copper panas a month for pocket expenses. The landless labouring classes according to Manu were to work for the upper classes and could not be made free even with the sanction of their own master. Narada names three kinds of labourers in order of preference—those serving in the army, those performing agricultural work and those carrying loads.

Forced Labour.

Visti (forced labour) and slavery were the two institution connected with labour. *Visti* was a well known factor in the industrial system of early Indian economic history and rendered possible the construction of giant works. The artisans, manufacturers, labourers and others had to work a day for the king each month. The village community had to create and maintain its public works such as wells, tanks, channels, roads and public buildings—in which each member of the community was required to contribute his share towards the upkeep of the public works.

Forced labour was fairly cmmon in ancient India. The state utilised its right to the free service as and when occasions demanded. Kautilya dwells at length on the various types of *visti*. The state fixed the number of men to be supplied by each faimly for such work. Rich persons used to send their slaves. An element of compulsion is evident and this can be taken as a typical example of exploitation of human labour. The class of *Dasa* and *Karmakaras* was always liable to forced labour (AS-11.15;V.3.). An officer known as *Vistibandhaka* was there to procure free labour. *Visti* was an important source of income to the state. Manu regards forced labour as a regular levy. It was a common practice sanctioned by the lawgivers. Under feudal set-up, the donees had the right to increase the amount of forced labour at their will and without any limitations. It appears from the epigraphic reords that with the extension of the scope of forced labour, it had come to stay as a regular practice along with its concomitants. In the Gupta period it included all sorts of free labour and exceeded all bond of limitations.

Forced contribution to labour or to royal troops could be exacted as a matter of right by the king during the visit of his officers and also for military purposes. In the sixth century A.D., it was imposed on smiths, chariot makers, barbers, potters, etc. People were forced to carry loads, make roads, and render many other types of miscellaneous works according to Kalhana. Hiuent-sang also refers to the system of forced labour. Efficiency of production could not be expected from those who were compelled work without payment (*IHQ*-XXXVIII.No,1.1962). India owed constructions and maintenance of all important public works, since days of Mauryas, like the Tibet road through the Himalayan mountains and the great temples of Tanjore among other things to the system of forced labour.

The practice of levying forced labour or labour tax was prevalent since the days of Kautilya or even earlier. The Gupta monarchs used to levy it. According to the *Agnipurana*, the king should provide food to such labourers. According to Lakshmidhara, blacksmiths, porters, boatsmen, owners of carriages, actors and dancers were liable to pay labour tax once a month. In the later period, during the movement of the army, people were forced to carry loads, make roads and render many other tyes of service. Even the Brahmanas were compelled to do such types of work during the reign of Harsa of Kashmir.

Forced labour was one of those cruel and immoral customs that injuriously affected the position of the poor. Kautilya regarded it as the lawful privilege of government servants and the landowing classes. Even the Buddhists and the Jainas did not raise their voice against it. It was one of the privileges which a king could bestow. The land was given in gift with the right to occasional forced labour (EI—IV.80; XI.81). The families of potters and industrial classes were assigned to the grantees. When a king visited a village, the people had to work hard to supply the provisions demanded by him. Even the nobles and rich were not exempt. (*EI*-IV. 80;XI,pp.6,177,81). The economic condition of the poor can be realised from the fact that milk, grass, fire wood, vegetables and so forth had to be furnished gratis by the villagers to royal officers and their servants. With a view to saving the donee from the trouble of some dues, Sivaskandavarmana ordered that—"this garden is to be free from taxes......from troubles about salt and sugar, free from taxes, forced labour, free from the taking of the oxen, of grass and wood, of vegetables and flowers, with these and other immunities of the eighteen kinds it must be exempted and caused to be exempted by the inhabitants of the province" (*EI*-I.p.6). By the 8th Century A.D., it had becom an all India phenomenon with its rigours and ramifications considerably increased. People had to render forced labour irrespective of the caste to which they belonged.

The employment of forced labour in the field of agriculture occurs for the first time in the *Bhagwatapura.* Three types of forced labour are noticeable.—

(i) involuntary unpaid labour (*Visti*)
(ii) involuntary paid labour
(iii) labour service exacted by usurers.

there is a tendency towards systematization of the system in the late medieval period. The *Saravali* (9th century A.D.)

reveals that the practice of using forced labour in agriculture had gained importance. There was scope for forced labour in the estates of some religious donees as well as those of secular landlords. Medhatithi did not find any need of giving legal sanction to this phenomenon of forced labour which had become more or less ingrained in society.

Slave Labour

The institution of slavery was yet another aspect of the labour problem in ancient India. The *Dasas* or slaves were given as presents in the Vedic period. Manu mentions seven kinds of slaves—

(i) a captive of war
(ii) a slave for maintenance
(iii) a son of a female slave
(iv) one purchased for money
(v) a slave obtained as present
(vi) a hereditary one
(vii) Condemned to slavery for offence

Narada has a list of fifteen kinds of slaves—

(viii) one born at master's house
(ix) one obtained by inheritance
(x) one maintained during a general famine
(xi) one pledged by bis rightful owner
(xii) one who has come forward declaring "I am thine"
(xiii) one slaved for stipulated period
(xiv) one who has become a slave in order to get maintenance
(xv) one self sold etc., or an apostate from asceticism.

According to Narada; the slaves did all impure work. The work of the slave was of lower nature. The number ef slaves was increased from time to time by the addition of persons who sold themselves to meet their obigations to creditors or fines imposed by government officials. Though the wage earner was more free but his life was even harder than that of the slaves. With the advance of time and crysttalisation of social institutions slavery became more and more institutionalised and its form and varieties incressed.

In the Vedic literature it was only the captive in war, in the *Vinapitaka* a list of three, in the *Vidhurapanditajtaka* in its verse four, in manu the list is widened to seven, Kautilya has eignt and in Narad we are presented with a list of fiften types of slaves. There were provisions for redemption and manumisson of slaves.

The king's slaves served in the industrial and agricultural establishment of the state (*AS*- II, 24) or fought in his array. Private slaves plied in the big and small agricultural estates and industrial enterprises. The masters sometimes let out the services of the slaves on hire and thus make a profitable business out of them. Female slaves were also used as concubines or prostitutes. Buddha recommended lenient treatment to slaves. Asoka did the same (*RE*-XIII).

The slaves had several legal difficulties and he was master's chattel in that sense. Vidura says—"I am a slave from my birth; my weal and woe come from the king. I am the king's slave even if I go to another, he may give me by right to thee". A slave can have no property. The doors of *Samgha* were closed to him. He could not stand as a witness, He had to face a lot of humiliations socially, economically, politically and even from other standard. The degradation was inherent in the class which served as drudge to the higher orders. The impure work, assigned to a slave by Narada, are prohibited for him in the *Arthasastra*. Manu and Narada countenance no rights of property for a slave but Kautilya allows him to earn, own and inherit property. His kinsmen have the priority of claim on his property over the master. Sale and mortgage into slavery are laid under severe stricture. Chastity of female slave is meticulously guarded not only against the master but against royal officers and others as well. According to Kautilya *arya* does not lose his birth right even if enslaved.

Slavery became more and more prominent with the rise of Magadha and there are innumerable references to it in the Buddhist literature where slaves are defined as men dependent on other of their fellowmen. In the early epics, slave was referred to as a farm animal. The *Dhatmasutras* lay down rules for the inheritance of slaves together with property of the deceased. This shows that there were slave owners in ancient India and slaves were also divided among heirs. A slave could be sold, pawned or lost over a game of dice and he had no say even in his own matter.

Prices of slaves varied according to health and skill. They worked in constant fear of punishment. They could purchase their freedom. Kautilya's attitude towards slave is better than the *Smritikaras*.

In the basic sphere of economic activity slaves did play part in ancient India. Slave labour was used in agriculture, in the royal estates, in private farms, in the estates belonging to the monasteries, and in various other activities. Slave labour came very close to the labour of free hired labourers, class. Kautilya keeps in a single group the slaves and hired labourers. Slaves were also used in the household. It was the patriarchical relation between the master and the slave that led Megasthenes to suggest that all Indians were free and not one of them was a slave. Slavery did play a part in the development of economic activities and represented a progressive phenomenon in comparison to the primitive society.

There were agricultural slaves and domestic slaves. The plutocrats hired slaves and labourers to work on their farms. The slaves also formed the retinue of princes and wealthy people. Though Buddha pleaded for better treatment of slaves, he did not outrightly advocate the abolition of poverty and slavery as social evils. In pre-Kautilyan period, the power of master over the slave was absolute. Kautilya imposed a heavy penalty upon men who made pledged slaves perform certain kinds of impure work. In the Gupta period the conditions became different. Here we see that Narad distinguishes slaves from free labourers on the ground that the former, unlike the latter, are employed in impure work. Impure work is done by the slaves and pure by free labourers, Narada and Katyayana reveal a general deterioration in the condition of slaves. Kautilya stopped the sale of free persons into slavery.

Hired Labourer.

The hired labourer stood below the slave. The unskilled hands are divided into the following five categories :—

(i) *Agricultural and pastoral labour* —The landowners employed a large number of agricultural labourers, *dasas* and *karmakaras* who had no standing in the corporate body. The mass of slaves and hired labourers in agricultural work were employed separately for tillage, field watching, harvesting, tending, grazing eattle and for dairy production. There were professional ploughmen, field watchers having their huts close to the field and even winnowers of grains;

(ii) *Industrial labour* —hired labourer side by side with slave labour were employed for spinning, weaving, or other manufactures in State establishments or by private owners;

(iii) *Mercantile labour* —hirelings along with slaves were employed in mercantile and marine labour to hawk the wares of the masters or to serve in the deck. They used to accompany their masters to foreign lands;

(iv) *Miscellaneous labour* (including domestic ones)— included labourers working with the slaves in the houses of rich persons or merchants. They also included labourers.

(v) *Sira-Vahakas* (of Brhaspati) —were perhaps people who cultivated *sira* lands. They were tenants at will who cultivated landholder, land for a share of the produce (ranging between one third and one fifty-Cf.—Wilson *Glossary*—p. 485).

Hired labourers were employed for agriculture, cattle rearing, industry and trade. The method of production involved the employment of hired labourer, forced labour, slave labour etc. Hired labourers were divided into three grades, viz., soldiers, cultivators and bearers of load, domestic servant etc. They were paid in cash or in a share of grain. Narad allows 1/10 of the grain produce to the agricultural servant, Brhaspati 1/5 with food or else 1/3 of crop without the same should be paid to the servants of the cultivators. Buddhist *Samghas* provided bulls and the field and normally received 1/6 share of the produce according to Itsing. These were modified according to seasons. In the monastic lands, the cultivating tenant got as much as 5/6. The *Smritis* stand for the reciprocal obligations of master and servant.

The advent of the new labouring class after the slaves is obviously due ro economic depression. The hired labourers and casual labourers were always in want and penury. Want and plenty prevailed side by side and although people held it degrading to work for hire, the number of persons reduced to such straits was by no means small. The *Pali* sources reveal to us that living was not easy for all. Want and starvation forced people to sell themselves to slavery and the same factors explains why in spite of degradation of hired labourer to a lower economic status, its ranks were swelled by the supply from the landless and the destitutes. The labourers were paid in cash or kind. Their normal working condition was pitiable and their diet was below standard. The average daily income of the workmen was the smallest copper piece in currency, far below the living wage :

20 *masak* a month or 2/3 per day (*AS*-II.24)

1 *pana*—16 *masak* for the lowest menials (Manu)

6 *panas*—96 *masak* for the highest plus one *drona* of grain and clothing every six month. (Manu VII. 126)

A *pana*—and a quarter for agricultural labourers and field watchers with provisions proportionate to the amount of work done (Kautilya-II.24).

Brhspati (XVI.8) refers to servants engaged on pay and those engaged for a share of grain.

The labourers were not always entitled to a square meal and sometimes the diet actually varied according to labour. Wages, whether paid in cash or kind were of a very low standard. The rates for share of profit were standardised by experts of the crop for the cultivator, of butter for the herdsmen, of the sale of proceeds for the pedlar (*AS*- III. IB). Brhspati liberalised this system (VI. 3). Labour legislation of the *Dharmashastras* shows that public conscience was not alive to the fundamental inequality in distribution of wealth because these protective laws were themselves derived from ancient tradition. The economic status of the slaves hired labourers and unskilled workers was worse. Among the hired workers, Brhaspati classifies the warriors, the cultivators, the porter and the household servants in a descending order of status (XVI. 10). A petty craftsmen's apprentice had generally a hard lot with little prospect of mitigation under any circumstances.

CHAPTER—9

Trade and Commerce

I

Trade is a natural sequel to industry since industrial product must look for markets for its disposal. The industrial advance was accompanied by the development of an intensive inland and foreign trade as well as by the rise of overseas trade. India's maritime trade activities are as old as the Indus Valley followed by the maritime activities of the Vedic *Panis.* The antiquity of Indian trade with foreign countries is an established fact by history.

(i) The Rigvedic references to ships and merchants sailing out for the sake of riches imply the existence of Indian sea-borne trade;

(ii) Dr. Sayce has maintained that the commerce between India and Babylonia must have been carried on as early as 3000 B. C. Indian Teak has been found in Babylonia;

(ii) Shalamanaser IV of Assyria (8th Century B. C.) received presents from Bactria and India;

(iv) It appears from the *Baveru Jataka* that the western Indians undertook trading voyages to the shores of the Persian gulf;

(v) Lassen has pointed out that the Egyptians dyed cloth with indigo and wrapped their mummies in Indian muslin, this shows regular trade contracts with Egypt;

(vi) The *Old Testament* also alludes to Indian trade with Western Asia and Palestine.

Indian overland and overseas trade and commerce must have been a very powerful factor in linking up race to race, nation to nation, country to country and culture to culture. Exchange of goods bound the country into a close economic unity to which even the foreign countries were brought into brisk commercial intercourse. As early as the Rigveda (I. 56.2) the merchants had become important as will be evident from the following lines- "As merchants desirous ~~of~~ of wealth surrounded the sea, so do the priests surround Indra". The Vedic *Panis* were a trading people.

Merchants traded in diverse articles, groceries, fruits, perfumes, juice, barks, timbers and various other miscellaneous articles. Shops were arranged in rows of two on two sides of the roads. The products of various industries led to an immense volume of trade-both internal and external. The stockist and the middle-men stood between the producers and the consumer. Volume of trade would presuppose existence of an excellent system of exchange. Barter was already in vogue in the beginning. Cattle formed one of the standards of valuation and also niska in the sense of metallic currency. *Hiranya, Hiranyapinda, Satamana, Suvarna, Pada, Krsnala* etc. were terms used for various types of currency in the early period. According to Arrian, the Indians coined money long before Alexander.

Besides organised shops and centres of sale of products, the hawkers also played the part in selling a varieties of goods etc. The big merchants collected cartload of wares from the centres of production and sent them to distant countries. The long line of two-wheeled bullock carts (as represented in the Bharhut sculptures) are the scenes of purchase and gift and there are references to big caravans, say five hundred wagons under a leader known as *Sarthavaha*. A caravan of one thousand carts going from East to West is also mentioned. Normally a *Sarthavaha* was placed incharge of five hundred carts. The big traders and merchants had their wholesale trade agents in the big cities. They distributed wares to retail dealers on a commission or share profit basis. Detailed rules are found mentioned in the *Arthashastra*. Retailers had to pay the value and profit at the rate which obtained when they received the merchandise and in which allowance for wear and tear was to be made. The traders should calculate the daily earnings of middlemen and fix that amount on which they are authorised to live, for whatever income falls between sellers and purchasers (that is *brokerage*) is different from profit. The middlemen had a decent income.

Partnership.

Partnership in trade and business was not unknown. It is said in the *MBH* that concerns of wealth should not be pursued alone. Merchants formed partnership in their trade ventures and they had lucrative profit. Instances of coorperation in business matters are not rare. Caravan parties, parties of mariners and others were brought together for the purpose of safety and security in their long journeys and accepted the leadership of the *Sarthavaha* for guidance and direction. The institution does not warrant the interference of any further syndicalism among traders. There are also references to villages of traders but nothing is known about features of such villages. Individual tradesman entered into compacts for mutual interest from their inherent business instinct and in the interest of the community of commercial interests. According to *Kautilya* (VIII-4), the traders unite to raise prices and make a profit. A *Samayikapatra* (according to *Sukraniti*) or business deed is one which individuals frame after combining their shares of capital for some business concern. Trade continued for long to be a wandering profession and also speculative.

Business Practice.

The trade practices give an indication of the development to commerce. Business deeds or documents were known. Big deals were made on credit and speculative merchants gave security. Merchants advertised their goods by various methods—singing praise by themselves through an agent, by giving publicity and so on. Strabo refers to the sale by public auction after notification. Political crisis had repercussions on business transactions. There is a vivid description of a shopkeeper in the Buddhist literature. He is pointed as a shrewd, cunning, clever, skilful in inspiring confidence among his clients and thereby attaining greatness in his walk of life. He is known as *Papanika*.

Sethi.

In the urban business community we come across the terms like *Shresthina* or *Sraisthya* of the Vedic literature which in the Buddhist period came to be known as *Sethi* occupying a position of primacy in the bussiness world. He was a great commercial magnate or merchant who sat in caravan across the high seas and from *Purvanta* to *Aparanta*. A wealthy and the popular magnate like the rural *Bhojaka* and industrial *Jethaka*, he was the head of the trading class standing in close relation to the king. According to the *Jatakas*, his wealth is placed at eighty crores. He stocked grains to dispose of in times of emergency for more profit.

The *Sethis* were the richest persons of the time and occupied a unique position in the economic set-up. Even an ordinary merchant sometimes called himself a *Sethi* as is evident from the *Karle Cave Inscription*. At the time of the dedication of Jetavana, Anathapindaka, the chief *Sethi* of Sravasti, was attended by five hundred *Sethis*. The Sethi was the link between the king and the mercantile community. He filied one of the highest offices of the State. Even ***Gahapati*** (one of seven jewels of the *ratnam* of a king) is explained by Buddhaghosh as ***Sethigahapati***. As a trader of mercantile community, he enjoyed a privileged position both in the political and social set-up.

Economically he was well off and when a king wanted to renounce the world he offered his accumulated fortune and requested him to stay (*Jataka* V. 185). He led cooperative efforts of the merchants. He is generally respected by the king, a citizen and country-folk. He had his office, no doubt, but he was not a civil servant in the real sense. He was selected by the king on the basis of his wealth and influence but in course of time his office, though selective in the beginning, tended to be hereditary. The *Jataka* refers to a sixth descendant continuing in the post of his fore-fathers (V. 384). He assisted the king in framing his financial policy and advised him on the methods and rates of assessment on big business. He carried king's orders to his fellow merchants and was possibly responsible for the execution of such orders. At times, he was assisted by *anusethi*.

The *Anusethi* or the *Sethi* had nothing to do with king's treasury. Tolls, customs, taxes of a particular business area were assigned to him as emoluments for his services to the State. As a result of urbanisation when the industrial and commercial activity grew more and more, he (*sethi*) rose into prominence and played a prominent role in the economic activties of the state. Naturally, therefore, he also influenced the urban or municipal adminstration which is evident from the Basarh, Paharpur and Damodarpur excavations. These remains throw interesting sidelights on the civil functions of the *Sethi*. Their liberal and unstinted charity enabled them to attain their phenomenol power and prosperity.

II

PRICE AND PROFIT

Commodities were produced by various industries but prices were fixed after people bargained and came to terms. This practice of bargaining was there for a pretty long time after the age of the *Jatakas*. The art of exchange between the producer and the consumer was a free bargain and haggling was a regular feature. With the growth of trade and industry, it was felt by all concerned tha there should be some sort of fixation to avoid dilly-dallying tactice. The advantages of a fixed price was growingly realised. The *aggatharaka* or *aggapanika* (*Jataka* I. 124) was possibly the court valuer who settled the price of goods ordered for the palace and that led to the setting up of certain standard rents.

According to Strabo the Mauryan Municipal Board regulated the prices. Kautilya lays down that the price expert, after assessing everything, should fix the price of merchandise with due regard to its having been manufactured long ago or imported from a distant country. We come across statute-fixed prices in Kautilya and Manu. Kautilya prescribes a profit of 5% over and above the fixed price of local commodities and 10% on foreign produce. Merchants, violating it, were to be punished (*AS*-IV. 2). According to Manu, the King should settle prices publicly with the merchants every fifth or fourteenth day- (VIII. 401 ff.).

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It appears that the big traders and merchants did not always follow the price limit set by the state. Kautilya says- "traders unite in causing rise and fall in the values of articles and live by making profits cent per cent" (*AS*-VIII. 4). Kautilya prescribes punishment for the same. Yajnavalkya (II. 549 ff) imposes fines for "traders combining to maintain price to the prejudice of labour and artisans, although knowing the rise and fall of prices; or to obstruct the sale of commodity by demanding a wrong price or for selling it". Visnu also prescribes punishment for selling for more than its worth (V. 125 ff). All these lawbooks go to show that there were dishonest traders or merchants who violated the principles of fixed price for the sake of more and more profit. The speculators also played a prominent part in this respect and at times even the state itself fell in line with the same tactics by cornering the goods and raising prices by artificial means to increase profit. The old law still prevailed that a price once fixed holds good and that a transaction cannot be removed.

Dishonest methods.

Dishonest dealings in weighing or measuring were there and these have been decried by our lawgivers. The goldsmiths led in the underhand methods. Another practice was to pass on bad articles as good ones. Adulteration, mixtures and underweighing were also prevalent for which punishment has been prescribed. Regarding adulteration Yajnavalkya (II. 244) repeats the injunction of Kautilya and Brhaspati. Manu also censures adulterers. Sometimes the middlemen or the price-experts had also their share of the spoils in a market dominated by unscrupulous pursuit of wealth. The worst offence in business transaction is to combine into conspiracy to drive away from the market a competitor by unfair disparagement of his produce or by blocking his sales or purchases. It is because of this that Manu confessed that pursuits of trafficking and usury are by themselves a mixture of truth and falsehood (IV. 6). Kautilya tried to control market through *Panyadhyaksa* (superintendent of commerce) whose duty was to supervise weights and measures (II. 14) and prevent deception of false weights, The fourth Board of the Mauryan municipal administration was charged with superintendence of trade and commerce including weights and measures.

Commercial Policy.

The commercial policy is traced to Kautilya. Special care was taken for the encouragement of trade and commerce followed by an equally strict control of marketing operations in the public interest. State control over marketing operation is a redeeming feature of Kautilya's *Arthashastra.* These works were entrusted partly to—

(i) *Sulkadhyaksa* (officer incharge of the city custom house)

(ii) *Panyadhyaksa* (officer incharge of merchandise or marketing officer)

(iii) *Samsthadhyaksa* (officer charged with the control of stocks of merchandies *Or* with the control of stocks of dealers).

The *Sulkadhyaksa* was required during the very process of collecting *sulka* upon imported merchandise within the city limits to arrange for its public sale at a fixed price. The control was so designed as to give the public the guarantee of a fair price for their purchases and leave no loopholes to the merchants for raising prices.

The *Panyadhyaksa* was charged with the double function of controlling the home market for consumption of idigenous goods and imported articles and also with exploring the foreign market for pushing the sale of indigenous merchandise. He took cognisance of both state and private merchandise. In so far as home market was concerned, his policy was designed to protect the public against unfair dealings by traders and for foreign markets he was expected to offer friendly advice and warning to the merchants engaged in export trades.

The function of *Samsthadhyaksa* was to protect the public against various malpractices of the dealers. Visnu (V. 122/23) enumerates various penalties for traders using false balances as well as those guilty of the sale of adulterated commodities of concerning the market, of failure to give delivery of articles to the purchasers after payment of the price and of selling commodities on which the king has laid an embargo.

State Trading.

According to Kautilya, the *Panyadhyaksa* had the task of pushing the sale of the state merchandise to the best advantage at home and abroad. He must be thoroughly conversant with the current market conditions, familiar with different price levels, the demand, the time for concentration and disposal etc. With regard to home market, he is required to collect the merchandise at one place in excess of supply for realisation of its proper price and later to lower or raise the price. Marketing of state merchandise of local manufacture is to be centralised under his control. He is warned against with-holding the sale of stock in excessive supply as well as against cornering the market.

State merchandise is to be sold at a fixed price to licensed dealers who are to be fined for lowering the price apparently for the purpose of attracting more customers. At the end of daily transactions the dealers are to make over the procedds of sale, and balance of the stock left as well as weights and measures to the *Panyadhyaksa.* As regards foreign markets, he is to consider the difference in price levels of the local and the imported merchandise and to make calculations for the margin of profit likely to accrue from the sale. If there was no prospect of profit, he should consider the chances of disposing them by barter or of keeping it in storage if there is a chance of profit and spend one-fourth of the expected profit for transport and to establish contact with various local officials for pushing the sale.

Kautilya gives a list of measures for the protection of state merchandise. Two highest revenue officials. *Samaharta* and *Pradeshta* were invested with powers with general direction to the *Adhyaksas* and their subordinates. Penalty is fixed for the theft of articles from government factories and warehouses which are stated to be included within the state-owned area.

Attempts were made towards the standardisation of weights and measures and there is definite and specific reference to it in

Kautilya (II 19). State factory was founded for the manufacture of weights and measures and a special officer called *Pautavadhyaksa* was placed incharge of it. The weights were to be manufactured out of iron, of stone belonging to a particular locality or of a wood of a particular texture. The inspection of weights and measures was to be carried out by *Pautavadhyksa* every four month and any deficiency in scales was liable to be punished. A series of balances was to be manufactured so as to give a maximum advantage to the state in collection of its dues. State control over weights and measures is also found in the *Dharmasutra*. Vasistha says that the people should be guarded against false weights and measures. The Nandas are credited with having introduced the system of scientific use of weights and measures (*Panini* II.4.21).

Though barter was prevalent, there was the development of a system of coinage of indigenous origin. Silver coins have been identified as *Karshapanas*. The punchmarked coins were issued by a central authority and the state issue of coins ts corroborated by the standard weight of the large majority of the same ranging from 51.5 to 52.5 grains. State regulation of coinage is evinent from Kautilya (II.12) who refers to *Laksanadhyaksa,* officer incharge of stamped coins. Coins were struck by the state authority. Mint regulations were precise. There was another officer of this department who was known as *Rupadarsaka* or examiner of coins. He was charged with directing the circulation of coins.

Nature of Trade :

Trade was one of the great upbuilders of the economic well-being of the country and right from the days of the Indus Valley civilisation, trading with distant lands was a feature of the Indian economic life. Ancient India had all types of inland and foreign trade. The merchant had an honoured position and an important place in the national economy of the country. The epics give a vivid description of the traders and the articles of trade which they carried. The volume of internal trade was greater than the foreign trade. There had been a movement of goods in different parts of the country with a rich variety and dimensions of productions.

Different state had trade relations with each other and there were various trade routes inside the countries of the east and the west for purposes of trade. Indian had connections with several countries of the East and the West for the purpose of trade. Traders were known by various names. Foreign trade was an honoured and a legitimate means of livelihood. It filled up the gap in country's productive organisation. Indian caravans travelled from one end of Asia to another. Kautilya and Manu have discussed the nature and importance of inland and foreign trade. Trade was an integral factor of national prosperity. Quality and craftsmanship were not sacrified to the requirements of the quantity. Kautilya and Manu realised the ultimate justification of all commercial activities. Manu has given directions for morality in trade and has insisted on the cardinal principles of sound trading.

III

TRADE ROUTES

Transport is the lifeblood of trade and industry. Means of transport and communications are the nerves of national organism. A verse in the *Rigveda* refers to the necessity of different forms of transport and the maintenance and protection of public highways as one of the duties of the king. Chariots, carts, pack animals like yak, goat, horses, camels and elephants were used in different regions according to convenience and royal roads and national highways were to be maintained. Roads were classified according to use and destination. Merchandise on the roads were carried out by carts and other means. Rivers also served as medium of transport. There were seagoing vessels for coastal traffic. The isolation of the *Gams* and *Janapadas* was broken by active trade and long highways of commerce intersecting between them. Cross country roads linked one with another and caravans plied along these roads linking into a common market.

The improving condition of trade is seen not only in the greater attention devoted to the roads and market towns but in the intelligent appreciation of the relative values of different trade routes. The routes leading to the Himalayas were better than those leading to the Daksinapatha though according to Kautilya the route to the south is to be preferred—by following which an abundance of merchandise of various kinds can be obtained (II.II-12).Kautilya's remarkable list of agricultural, manufacturing and other products of different regions of India gives an idea of the extent of internal trade. The Mauryas controlled not only all important internal trade routes but also most of the land and sea routes leading outside the country to the East and the West. The liberation of the Indus Valley and territorial gains from Seleucos gave the Mauryas control over the North-Western and Western land routes which linked India to the Mediterranean lands. The conquest of Deccan brought some of the most important routes and ports under the empire and the conquest of Kalinga completed the process by eliminating the only possible rival for the mastery of Eastern trade. Friendship with Hellenistic states also favoured the expansion of India's trade with Western Asia and Egypt.

We come acrcss the following important overland routes—

(i) Linking the middle Ganges valley with the upper Godavari Valley and the South-Western coast;

(ii) Linking the middle Ganges valley with the lower Ganges valley and the Estern coast;

(iii) Linking the middle Ganges valley with Sindhu and the Indus delta;

(iv) Linking the middle Ganges Valley with the Indus Valley and Gandhar:

The *Suttanipata* gives the following details about routes and places of importance—

(i) From Pratisthan of Alaka to Mahismati, Ujjain, Gonaddha, Vidisa, Kausambi, Saketa, Sravasti, Kapilavastu.

(ii) Southward from Kapilvastu within the middle Ganges Valley, the route extended to Kusinara, Pava, Vaisali, it went further south to Pataliputra, Nalanda, Rajgriha and Gaya.

(iii) The foremost ancillary routes of Pratisthan—Sravasti system were those connecting its northern and southern portions to the great Western seaport of Bharukacha (Broach of Barygaza).

(iv) In the South Bharukacha was connected by means of cart tracks with Godavari Road leading to Pratisthana and Tagara. These Western extension of the main routes became busy with traffic after Bharukacha became the chief outlet of Indian goods for Western world.

(v) The terminus of the Eastern route was the seaport of Tamralipti. It met the Pratisthan-Sravasti route at Kausambi via Gaya and Varanasi.

River route passed through Varanasi, Pataliputra and Champa. There is little evidence of overland landroute to the east of Champa.

(vi) The East-West route ran between Pataliputra and the Indus.... a road from *Purvanta* to *Aparanta* and it converged with Kausambi-Tamralipti route between Kausambi and Varanasi.

The Rajgriha-Kalinga route passed through Bodh-Gaya to Orissa.

Long before Megasthenes, there was a road linking Mithila with Gandhar and Kashmir. Passing through Kampilya, it crossed Sakala and met Taxila and Pushakalavati in Gandhara. To the South-East it extended from Mithila to the Anga city of Champa linking farthest East to North-West.

Merchants from different parts of the country visited centres of trade like Rajagriha, Gandhar, Champa, Viheha etc. That these cities had trade transactions through land routes is shown by references to the vists of merchants from Gandhar and Kashmir to Videha. The king of Videha is described as enquiring from the tradesmen about the health of his friend, the kings of Gandhar and Kashmir (*Jataka*-III. 365). Sindh horses were used in Videha.

(vii) The Rajgir-Pushakalavati route via Takshasila was the most busy trade route. Takshasila was an international trade centre and established commercial relation between India and the west. This was the *Uttarapatha* route of Panini or the Northern route of the Greeks. It was utilised during the Mauryan period. Shershah repaired it and made it popular and it is known today as the Grand Trunk. It passed through Pataliputra, Varanasi, Kausambi, Mathura, Indraprastha, and Sakala. From Pushakalavati, it branched off to Kashmir to the North-East and Bactria to the North-west. It was through Rajgriha Pushakalavati route that Krishna and Bhima had travelled from Indraprastha to Rajgriha. They went first to Mithila then to Rajgriha.

(viii) The Rajgriha-Pratisthan route (according to Panini) was known as *Kantarapatha* because of its passing through the forest region. Upto Kausambi, it was the same old Rajgriha-Pushakalavati route from where it passed through Vidisa, Gonarda, Ujjain, Mahismati and then to Pratisthana. Caravanas from Rajgriha. Pataliputra, Vaisali to Bharukacha, went upto Mahismati through this route from where it seems to have branched off to Bharukacha. From Kausambi there was another route leading to Sravasti through which traders from north Bihar went to the trade centres of South-West India. Rajgir-Sindh route was also popular. The road to Sindh lay across deserts and forests, and the caravan by that route marched in the cool of the night guided by stars and landpilots known as *Thalaniyamaka*.

(ix) Bhrgukacha was also connected with Gandhar by a road through the exact course of this road is not known.

(x) From Pushakalavati, the road led to Bactria. This route was much preferred but because of constant war and tribal movements this route was not very hospitable to international trade. It was much reduced by the Parthian wars in the First century A. D. giving tremendous importance to the sea-borne trade from Bharukacha.

(xi) India was connected with the west on land by three roads (i) the northernmost was along the Kabul river across the narrow section of the mountains of Afganistan where only the Hindukush separates the basins of the Oxus and the Indus; (ii) the second lay about five hundred miles to the South-West where the Afgan mountains end and open up an easy way across the plateau from

Kandhar to Herat; and another way from the South-West of Kandhar through the Bolan Pass with the lower Indus valley and lastly (iii) the third route led across the deserts of Makram or along the coast of Baluchistan.

During the Mauryan period, roads were marked with sign-boards noting turnings and distances at intervals. A good portion of inland trade was also carried along the rivers. Land routes were dispensed with where a water course could be available and traders normally sailed from Benares to Tamralipti, a great port in the east. The sea routes from this port ran into three directions-two of them were coastal routes one of which ran in the southwesterly direction past the coast of Kalinga and Coromondel to South India and Ceylon.

The south-easterly route from Tamralipti was followed in the early voyages to Savarnabhumi.

River routes were also very popular. Ganga, Yamuna, Sarju, Son, Gandaki, Kosi, Krishna, Kaveri, Tungabhadra, Mahanadi, Godavari etc. were also utilised for trade and navigational purposes. There were important riverports in the country. Heavy transportation was carried only mainly through rivers. Kumhrar excavations have revealed that heavy chunar sandstone or pillars were brought to Pataliputra through the Ganges. Mauryan pillars were transported through rivers. The riverports were connected with trade centres on the land. Panini makes a mention of various types of boats. Navigation was in a highly advanced stage during the time of Kautilya who considers river traffic very good and prefers coastal trade to oceanic trade. The Ganga was the most important inland water way.

Sea-Route.

Foreign trade was carried across the seas. Sea voyages are referred to in the *Rigveda*. Expert voyagers are recognised in Manu's code as respectable. Ship building was an important industry and this was a state monopoly under the Mauryas. The shipowners kept their vessels at ports and took merchants to their destination. The Mauryan Admiralty Department let out ships on hire to professional merchants. Malabar and Coromandel coasts were dotted with seaports. Bharukacha was the most flourishing seaport in the north. Suraparaka and Barbaricum were equally important. Tamralipti was the most important in the east. Indian shipping was sufficiently expanded to reach all the known ranges of the commercial world. There was Babylonian commerce with Bharakacha in the seventh century B. C., though India's maritime trade relations with the west can be traced back to 3000 B. C. Indian-Mesopotamian trade had three routes.

(i) a sea route along the coast of Sindh, Gedrosia and Iran;

(ii) a mixed water and land route from Gandhar and Bactria along the Oxus and across the Caspian and Black sea.

(iii) Overland route from Sindh through Iran.

Between Arabia and India was Socotra, the centre of international trade where persons from different countries met to exchange their cargoes. At the time of Periplus, it was a mixture of Arab, Indians and Greeks. Berbera was an intermediary mart between Egypt and India. The Arabs has monopoly at Red sea. There was active intercourse between Egypt and South India. The voyage between India and Egypt was a risky affair and rarely undertaken. The Indo-Egyptian routes appear to be from Alxandaria along the Nile. Pliny describes how Indian route was shortened by successive discoveries, the last and the most important of the series was the discovery of the monsoon by Hippalus.

The early traders sailed to foreign lands for transacting business. They were carrying on brisk overseas trade. Prince Vijaya's voyage to Ceylon with his seven hundred followers presupposes a regular sea trade and intercourse. Baudhayan and Manu placed the profession of sea faring among the prohibited practises of the Brahmanas. Naturally, the Vaisyas took up the lead in this matter. The Brahmanas of the north did not give up the sea faring as is evident from Baudhayana. For the sea faring people, proper training was given in the science of navigation which was known as *Niyamakasippa.* They were trained in the knowledge of various trade routes, direction of winds, in the utilisation of *Disakas.* Birds were of great

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The mariners (*Niyamakas*) organised themselves into guilds The *Mahaniddesa* tells us that India's trade to the east existed with Kala-mukha, Suvarnabhumi, Vesunga, Verapatha, Takkola, Tamali, Tamraparni, Java etc. The *Apadana* states that the traders from Malaya and China visited India. Maritime commerce between India and Babylonia flourished. The *Suparaka Jataka* indicates that a band of travellers sailed from the port of Bharukacha and passed through six seas (*Jataka*-IV. 138-43) under the leadership of a skilled mariner and these seas have been identified with the Persion gulf; the Arabian coast, Nubia, the canal joining Read sea and the Mediteranean etc. India maintained connections with Egypt by Red sea route. Strabo has preserved an interesting reminiscences of the Indian share in the western trade. In the reign of Ptolemy Eurgetes (145-116 B. C.) an Indian who was stranded on the shore of the Arabian gulf (Red sea) was brought to Alexandaria. Having learnt Greek there, he gave the king information about the sea route to India. Then Ptolemy sent two expeditions.

The commercial bond between India and Arabia, lasting for more than thousand years, suffered a set back under the impact of Roman empire. The Ptolemies pursued the policy of cultivating direct trade with India and making it free from the dependence on Yemen. The Arabs did not like Roman's direct connection with India. The balance of Indo-Roman trade was in India's favour. The people of South India were expert seafarers and their ships were more seaworthy and of larger size. It was through Tamralipti that South East Asia was approached. In the *Jatakas* Suvarnabhumi is the regular field of mercantile adventure. The mariners of Andhra, Kalinga and Bengal made bold to embark across the seas and colonise *enmasse* unlike the traders of the gulf of Cambay which dealt with the Western world.

The sea voyage was full of danger but it was the love of gain that inspired them to defy these dangers. Shipwreck is a common catastrophe. Ocean traffic was far more dangerous than the land traffic. The gulfs of Cutch and Cambay were dangerous zones.

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Periplus describes the vagaries of the tidal bore. The state maintained a regular service of pilotage. Piracy was another danger for maritime commerce. The Naga pirates were active in the Eastern waters in the days of Asoka. The Konkan coast was the rendezvous of piratical activities in the Indian Ocean. Both Periplus and Pliny refer to it. In spite of all these difficulties, the Indian mariners braved the sea by an unconquerable spirit of adventure.

IV

Trade

(A) **Internal Trade**—Internal trade was managed by hawkers, small shopkeepers, big merchants and magnates controlling production and distribution of goods. India developed an extensive system of inland trade along recognised routes marked by successive stages and that helped to link up the different parts of the country. Two of these routes were of outstanding importance;

(i) the South-West North-East route joining Pratisthana;
(ii) East-North-West route running by river from Champa.

A trans-shipping route from Champa to Suvarnabhumi was very popular. Periplus records two trade routes from North-Western frontier; one led down the Indus to Minanagar, capital of the Indo-Scythians, and its port of Barbaricum and another joined Kashmir, Hindukush and Kabul by way of Pushkalavati to the famous emporium of Barygaza. Ujjain was the focal point of South-West-North-East route and was connected with Barygaza. To the same famous port went routes from Pratisthana which were themselves connected with other routes reaching eastward to the Krishna-Godavari delta. A great trade was borne simultaneously along western and eastern coasts. From the Chola ports, country craft sailed upto Malabar while large vessels made voyages to the mouths of the Ganges. Periplus and Ptolemy mention the name of the chief marts of internal trade in the country like Bharukacha, Sopara, Kalyana, Cannanore or Mangalore, Kottayam, Porakad, Kaveripattanam, Pondichery, Pitunda, Dandapur, Ujjain, Tamralipti etc.

Sarthavaha.

Among the traders controlling production and distribution of goods, there were small and big parties. The wholesalers distributed to retailers who were rather agents or salesmen and rules were laid down for the retailers and they had to pay the value and profit at that rate which obtained when they received the merchandise. The traders also fixed commission agents and middlemen. Traders also combined to make joint ventures and the caravan parties were brought together under the leadership of *Sarthavaha*. The economic life of ancient India evinces a developed state of cooperative activities and '*Sartha*' stood for internal transport agency. The *Sartha* or *Mahasartha* comprised a good number of chariots. *Sarthavaha* was the chairman of the *Sarthamandal*. He was the head of the Sartha and he had sufficient knowledge of different routes, establishment and administration and also of security. It was his duty to assemble a great number of carts and wagons, having sufficient draught animals, to load up the merchandise. He had also to look after the boarding, lodging and other amenities of the people travelling and had also to arrange for loading and unloading at different centres on the route. *Sarthavaha*, the leader of the caravan trade, travelled in his own wagon. Kautilya prescribes protection to the *Sartha* for which a road cess was to be secured by the *Vivitadhyaksa*. During the night fall, camp fire was lit all around the parked vehicles. They also carried water for use during the journey. The traffic rules had to be followed for the sake of safety.

Sethi.

Internal trade was carried on by the experts in trade matters. Big deals were made on credit. The rural shopkeepers was known as *Papanika* and in the urban area the Sethis controlled the internal trade. He invested capital, employed men and earned profit to such an extent that a *Sethi* of Rajgriha paid two lacs as his medical fees. He was the leader of the merchant community and was normally associated with the big business. He had to play a very big role in the commercial life and as a leader of the urban business class, he influenced the course of internal trade to a great extent. The *Sethi* cut through the ancient system of caste and represented a plutocracy perpetuating itself as an aristocracy. He represented the powerful economic interest.

The economic specialisation of various areas and zones made a permanent exchange of commodities essential. Circulation of money was also expanding. Ganges valley was the principal trading area and in matters of internal trade Bharukacha, Patala in the Indus delta, Pushakalawati, Sakala, Kausambi, Varanasi, Ujjain, Patliputra, Champa etc. were important trade centres. Joint stock company and trader's League were also there. Internal trade was in a flourishing state.

Provisions were made for commercial education to facilitate business relations. The *Mahavagga* refers to *Lekha*, *Ganana* and *Rupa* (writing accounts and money) in this connection (*SBE*-XIII. 201ff). State tried to foster all kinds of trade interests. The retail trade was very popular and was normally done by the pedlars. According to Periplus, Paithan, Ter, Sopara, Kalyan etc. in Western India were important centres of wholesale trade. These were facilitated by the existence of extensive system of caravan routes which connected the Gangetic Valley with all parts of India above the Vindhya and Satpura range. The routes were determined by the geographical and political factors and some of these routes have also been mentioned by the Periplus. Besides the cross country routes there were ancillary feeder routes.

The State took measures to facilitate internal trading voyages. Traders had to pay *vartani* (road cess) and *sulka* (octrol). Cotton was brought from eastern and South-Western region (*Aparanta*), silk from China and Bahlika (Bactria), blankets from Kamboja (Ghazna), weapons of steel from Wastern region and *Aparanta*, horses and camels from North-Western region and elephants from Eastern and southern regions.

The rows of shops along what have been called the high street and side street have been discovered at Bhita. The seaports must have served as natural outlets of the import and export trade borne along long distance routes from the interior. Tamralipti became the emporium of vast trade of Eastern India across the seas. It was the port of call from voyages from China, Indonesia, and Ceylon to Eastern India and back. Fahien used this port. Itsing was accompanied from Tamralipti to Bodh-Gaya by many hundreds of merchants. The journey of merchants from Ayodhya to Tamralipti is mentioned in the *Dudhpani Rock Inscription* of Udayamana. According to Hiuentsang Ganjam grew rich because of its maritime trade.

Yajnavalkya discusses the rules of partnership and it appears that business was connected with joint enterprises. Profits were divided according to share in the capital or as agreed among partners. The Budhist monasteries of Western India invested part of their donations in business, supplied capital loans and provisions to the trade caravans. These monasteries were located near the interconnecting trade routes covering a wide part of Western India.

Financial administration followed the system prescribed by Kautilya. Money-lending and trade along with agriculture and cattle rearing were the occupation of the Vaisyas. According to Manu and Yajnavalkya, the Vaisyas possessed technical knowledge. Trade relations form the subject of some well known titles of law in the *Smritis*, for example, "*rescission of sale and purchase, sale without ownership, partnership* etc". The policy of state control of trade recommended in the *Smritis* of the post-Mauryan period is in line with that of the Mauryan administration. Prices of commodities are to be fixed by the king at stated intervals and he is also to arrange for the stamping and periodical inspection of weights and measures. Purchase at lower price and sale at higher price is to be checked and punished according to Yajnavalkya.

Trade had two distinct sectors private and public. The state is shown to reserve the right of settling rates on consideration of relevant data. Steps taken to explore foreign markets appear to be basically inspired by commercial motives. By regulating prices and fixing rates of profits the state takes an important measure to check profiteering. According to Kautilya, only authorised persons should be employed as middleman and he appears to bear a personal liabi-

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lity to the state. The *Antapala* was to be held responsible for any loss caused to the merchandise. The traders' profit and royal levy form the two invariable factors of the price.

Concept of price.

The concept of just price can give protection in varying degrees to all interests. The state as trader has some advantage over the private sector. The mechanism of trade in Kautilya is armed against corrupt practices and punishments are prescribed for every kind of offence, against trade regulations. In Kautilya's account of trade and commerce there is a palpable gap regarding the mechanism of retail sale and exploring the determinants of price at the source. According to Manu, King should examine price schedules every fortnight. Yajnavalkya prescribed heavy fines for fraudulent business method. Profits should be determined according to *Yogaksema.* A Brahmana was to take to commerce only in adverse circumstances and the profession of trade was meant specially for the Vaisyas. Commerce was a mixture of falsehood and truth. The charter of Visnusena (A.D. 592) records how every five days an official had to fix prices (*arggha*) of commodities and had to inform his higher authorities. *Petavikavarika* was an official connected with commercial transaction. He was concerned with the fixation of prices of commodities.

The trader fromed a separate class and handled both inland and foreign trade. Kamandaka advises the king to patronise the trading class. Kalidas and Sudraka also throw a flood of light on contemporary trade and commerce. There were big and small traders dealing with inland trade. The traders, besides using various types of transport, also employed hired labourers for carrying merchandise from one place to another. The *Nagarasresthina* and the *Sarthavaha* were the two types of leading merchants. The *Sethi* managed the exchange of goods between the town and the country and he also lent money. He was a merchant whose wealth, popularity and influence were reasons for his selection. He acted as the chief trading community leader, moneylender and banker and an

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important member of the town administration. *Sarthavaha* was equally important in urban life and administration.

Surplus produce was largely in the hands of middlemen. Roads, in later period, were not so safe as in the Mauryan period. Rivers were also used as routes and the Vangas were expert in navigation according to Kalidas. Articles of internal trade included everything but Brahmins were forbidden from selling milk, sour milk, clarified butter, honey, bee-wax, lac, pungent condiments, liquid used for flavouring, spirituous liquor, meat, boiled rice. They could sell flower and incense.

Articles of daily use were sold in village market. Salt was imported from the sea coast, pepper, sandal wood and coral from South India, musk, suffron and yak from the Himalayan region, elephants from Kalinga, Anga and Assam, gold, copper, iron and mica from Bihar. According to Kalidas, there was a great commercial magnate at Hastinapur. Narad and Brhaspati lay down numerous laws and regulations to safeguard the interest of buyers and sellers alike. Dishonest dealings were prevalent in the market. Laws against adulteration are prescribed and business deeds and documents are also mentioned. Surplus produced at one place was sent to another part. Traders of Kashmir went to far off regions in the country. Business was also done in villages through *Hattas* (markets) and *bazars* which was a regular feature of every town. Important markets were under the control of the *Mahajanas* (*EI*-I. 162 ff).

Markets.

We have no idea about the evolution of market in India but the prevalence of trade since time immemorial presupposes the existence of markets. The weights and measures of the Indus Valley had greater accuracy and consistency than those of Elam and Mesopotamia. The decimal weights were surely employed in commercial transactions. We have reference to various types of markets in the Epics. In fairs goods were brought and sold. In the *Arthashastra* there are reference to officials incharge of the markets. In the context of the *Jatakas, nigama* may be interpreted to mean a market.

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According to *Maha Umagga Jataka*, there were four market towns in Mithila. The *Panyagriha* of Kautilya indicated a market in which each building was earmarked for a particular type of merchandise. There were separate store houses. *Panyagriha* was actually a trading house which implies a market. That the market at Pataliputra must have been immense is borne out by Megasthenes who has referred to some officers of state as incharge of the market. Aristobulus has referred to the markets at Taxila where prostitution was also practised. Pliny refers to the market at Udumbara. It was a great centre of trade dealing with various kinds of goods. Sialkot was a great centre of trade and a flourishing market under Menander. The city market could well be compared with that of Pataliputra. There was a regular trade between Sialkot (Sagala) and Pātaliputra. Mention is also made of the market town of Barbaricum. Bharukacha and Ujjain were also important market towns.

In the South Paithan on the Godavari was an important market town. Tagara (Ter) was another important city of commercial importance. Sopara and Kalyan were important market towns. Beyond Kalyan were Semylla, Mandagara, Balipatna, Meligara, Baizantipur etc. Muziris in Kerala, Nely Cynda of the Pandyan Kingdom, Kolkai, Arguru, Poduca, Sopatma, Masalica (Masulipattam), Dusarra, etc. were important market towns. Madura was an important commercial centre. The markets of Madura and Puhar were very important in South India.

As late as the sixth century A. D. Cosmas noticed the famous marts of India like Sindos, Orohatta, Kalliana, Sibor, Malle, Parle, Mangaroth, Solapatama, Nalopatam, Pondupatan etc. Thaneshwar had a large accumulation of rare and valuable merchandise from every quarter according to Hiuentsang. Nepal is recorded to have used coins from red coppers for commercial purposes. Charitapur in Orissa was another commercial centre. There was abundance of grain at Kanchipur. In Valabhi, rare and valuable products of different regions were stored. It was a mart of great importance. Bharukacha was not very important in his days. Hiuentsang is more specific about Saurastra on the Western Sea route where all its inhabitants derived their livelihood from the sea and engaged themselves in commerce and exchange of commodities. He relates that Ganjam (Orissa) was productive and bordered on the sea and it abounded in many rare and valuable articles. Its traders used courie shells and pearls in commercial transactions.

Roads.

Internal trade routes helped the growth and prosperity of internal trade. We have already discussed the trade routes earlier. It is evident that travellers could proceed from north to south or east to west throughout the country. Kapisa was the most westerly point of contact of commerce by land with the tracts of central and Eastern India and the next landmark was Taxila. Benares was the next important city. It could be approached from Magadha, Anga and even distant Kaveripattanam and also from Mahismati and Sagala. There existed a network of roads. Goods were brought by road. During the time of Asoka there was a route from Pataliputra down to Dakshinapatha through the Pandyan and Chola territories as far Ceylon. It is further supported by the Hathigumpha Inscription of Kharavela. According to Pliny there existed a road from Tamralipti to Kalinga and from there to Tripuri and Mahismati. Broach was connected with Paithan and Ujjain which continued to be a commercial centre for a pretty long time. From Ujjain there was a route to Somnath Patta via Mandasor, Broach, Sopara upto Nasik.

Ptolemy refers to six towns of the Pandyas and eight towns of the Cholas. Pithund (Warangal) could be reached from Anga and there was some kind of communication. Both Fahien and Hiuentsang travelled by the various routes. They had travelled through almost the same roads. Samudragupta penetrated South India by going through Bilaspur, Raipur, Sambalpur, Jharkhand in Ganjam and Visakhapatnam district, Pithapuram Vengi, Palakadda, He moved from central India into Bihar, Orissa, Tamilnadu, Andhra-Pradesh, and returned to Pataliputra through the former Central provinces. Hiuentsang travelled to Dakshinapath from Tamluk.

Both the Periplus and Pliny give some indication of the topographical set-up. There was a silk route from China to Persia.

Cosmas refers to it. Another route from Pataliputra coursed through Champa, Kajangala, Pundravardhana upto Kamrup. Bhaskarvarman travelled by ship upto Rajmahal in order to attend a conference with Harsa. Hiuentsang found that from Kamrup one could travel to Burma and then on to China.

Public Safety :

In order to see that the commercial traffic did not suffer, specific measures of a deterrant nature were taken for the protection of the public and traders. Kautilya prescribed measures for the removal of all obstructions from roads. The safety of merchandise was ensured either by individual or by the State security officials or it became the collective responsibility of the village. The *Nagaraka* appears to have had public safety as one of his main functions. Asoka took welfare measures in the interest of public safety. The institution of watchman (*Catas* and *bhatas*) must have been made with an eye on public safety. The *Silapaddikaram* (5th Century A. D.) refer to local sentinels in Madura.

(B) Foreign Trade :

With the coming of the Mauryans in historical period, India took its place in international family with Syria, Egypt, Cyrene, Macedonia, Epirus etc. The infilux of foreigners at Pataliputra was so great that the municipal Board had to set apart a committee to look after them. The Macedonians were struck by the dockyards of the Punjabh tribes. The ship industry was monopolised by the Mauryas who maintained a strong admiralty, employing its leet both for naval and military purposes. It was under the Satvahanas that western port of Bharukacha and Sopara were equipped with rest houses. They persued a vigorous commercial policy and Kanheri caves contain sculptural representations of voyages through sea. The state maintained a regular service of pilotage. The state took great interest in the commercial activities and Periplus refers to it. The Andhras were veteran seafarers and their coins bear the advice of ships.

The ruler of the prosperous trading communities of the Western Sea board took possession of Kalyan and subjected its trade to the

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several restriction, so that if the Greek vessels entered its port accidentally they were seized and sent under escort to Barygaza. It was an attempt to divert the overseas trade of Kalyan and concentrate it at Bharukacha. The Cholas, Kalingas, the Vangas and the people of Pundra and Samtata were their rivals in Eastern trade. The kings of Vanga had powerful naval forces.

Under the Kushanas the Roman trade was at its height. Rome was alive to the importance of Yeu-Chi alliance against the Parthians and Sassanians and as controller of great overland trade route through Afganistan between the east and the west. The sea-borne trade of India and China is well supported by a Chinese coin of the second century B.C. found at Mysore. A vigorous trade sprang up between China and Bactria. Chinese silk captured the world market and as a result of commercial relation between India and China, India sometimes fulfilled the demand of Chinese silk serving as middleman traders. The great role played for centuries by India in the Mediterranean trade was due to the fact that she was in direct communication with the Far-East.

The axis of commercial life was not only continental but maritime. The busy continental route ran through Mesopotamia and Baluchistan to India and the other by central Asia or the silk route. India was thus the point of contact between the Far-East and the Western world. It was the exporting centre of commercial goods and it supplied the existing demands of international markets because of her bulk production.

Professor Rostovtzeff has made a masterly study of these developments. India supplied Egypt with ivory, tortoise shells, pearls, pigments, dyes, rice, pepper, nard, costum, rare woods, medicinal substance, cotton, silk etc. The routes of immemorial antiquity which connected India with Babylon were far more frequented and better developed. A channel of Indian trade was provided by the ancient roads across the Iranian plateau to Seleucia on the Tigris. Transport by these routes was safer and cheaper than by the Persian gulf. The existence of a brisk commercial intercourse with foreign lands along various routes doubtless had a large part in suggesting to Asoka the great idea of sending his

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mission to these lands to spread the gospel of Buddhism. The trade between India and Seleucide empire was conducted both by land and sea.

Certain other factors revolutionised India's trade with the west and the most important was the discovery of monsoon. Greek mariners undertook direct voyages to the Indus delta, Gujerat coasts and Malabar ports between first Century B.C. and second Century A.D. The other factor was the increasing Roman demand for Indian luxuries which facilitated maritime trade between Rome and India. The trade reached its peak in the age of Augustus. Roman merchants played active parts in the maritime trade. Large ships from Egypt visited India and the Sangam literature mantions colonies of Yavana merchants in coastal cities. Fragments of Roman pottery and hoards of Roman Imperial coins testify to the existence of brisk trade. Periplus is emphatic on the point that the Indians were equally active in this maritime trade.

The *Milindapanha* shows acquaintance with ocean going ships freighted with hundreds of thousands of packages and others carrying numerous passengers and provided with masts, anchors, straps, sails and ropes. We have the history of an Indian colony at Armenia between 130 B.C. and 300 A.D. India advanced towards economic progress in the post-Mauryan period on account of her prosperous foreign trade. The high prosperity of Indian cities is attested to by the contemporary sources. The contemporary sources present us with the pictures of humming industry and commerce in cities bright with richly stocked *bazars* and palatial residences, well laid out streets, parks and gardens and alive with a varied and teeming population. Periplus hints at the luxurious tastes of contemporary kings. People of the upper strata and middle class were happy as is evident from Vatsyayan but the lot of the poor was as miserable as it is today.

Bactria-the international trade route.

Ancient India's link with Western Asia is very old and the trade was carried both by sea and by land. Egyptian mummies are wrapped in Indian muslins. Queen Hapsetsut imported incense from

India. Elephants and teaks also went from India. There was a commercial link between west Asia and Tamilnadu as early as the fifth century B.C. The *Jatakas* refer trade relation between India and Babylonia. The scope of international trade further increased after Alexander. The Uttarapath route terminating at Bactria was a famous trade route. Bactria was the import transit trade centre between India, China, Central Asia, Mediterranean world and from there it proceeded through the northern part of Persian desert, town of Herat and Meru, the Zagross Valley across the Tigris and the Eupharates to Antioch in Syria. Khyber Pass was nearer to the international trade route which became quite busy from the first century B.C. with the establishment of a more regular traffic in silk. Persian gulf was used by the traders from very early times. Nearchos was employed by Alexanders to explore this route from the Indus to the Euphrates. It took him six months to reach Euphrates.

By the third century B. C. Bactria and Parthia became independent powers and throve immensely on the great East-West transit conducted through Bactria's boundaries. The recent excavations at Begram show that the scale of trade was very high and many countries were taking part in trade transactions. Bactria enjoyed money economy. When the sea route was not very much developed, overland trade through Bactria (and Parthia) was undoubtedly hevaier.

India's trade connection with West Asia was a contributing factor in bringing about the alliance between the Selucides and Chandragupta Maurya. The Parthian took full advantage of the geographical position. They made themselves wealthy on the flourishing trade with China and India on the one hand and with Roman Empire on the other. Parthian merchants were well known for their shrewd and haggling nature. They knew that if any direct link between China and Rome was established it would be disastrous for them. When the Chinese made enquiries about the sea, the Parthians frightened them by describing the horrors of a long sea voyage. The Parthians made exorbitant rates of profit and the these forced the traders to find out another route and to avoid Parthia as far as possible.

By the end of the first century B. C., they started sending considerable portion of merchandise through India. When there was rift between Rome and Parthia, the Romans found out new trade routes. It was trade in transit between the Western countries and hither Asia that kept the routes of North-West India busy. Through this two way traffic went on for a considerable period. The relations etablished between them through transit trades were no less significant as India brought enough riches to that region. The transit trade between India and Rome in silk became possible because it was diverted by the Parthian hostility via the East coast of India to the ports of Malabar coast from where it went to the west.

The influence of the Kushanas was based largely upon the profits from the the trade between India and China on the one hand and west on the other. Armenia was also a bone of contention between the Romans and the Parthians and both were keen to gain control over it. The policy of the Roman empire during the period was to encourage direct sea trade with India and diminish overland trade with the hostile land of Parthia. An expedition was sent by Augustus in 25 B. C. to secure the command of the sea route to India and Aden was soon occupied by a colony of Egyptians and Greeks. Things changed after the discovery of Hippalus who noted the existence of monsoon wind blowing regularly across Indian Ocean who would enable the ships to sail right across the Indian Ocean. In less than three months, Indians could reach Alexandaria, the greatest emporium of the western world. There was a great increase in the maritime trade. A ship a day left Egypt for the east. The Sangam literature confirms this position. There were regular Indian embassies to Rome. During the first four centuries of the Christian era, there was a great demand for Indian manufactures and articles of luxury. Trade with Rome gave a great impetus to the sea borne trade between India and the Mediterranean countries.

With the discovery of monsoon, a very busy period of the early Indian foreign trade began. Arabians and Indians used the intervening seas as a highway of trade from fairly ancient times. We learn from Herodotus that Skylax of Caryanda sailed all the way to Egypt from the Indus in 531 B. C. and it took two and half years to complete the voyage round Arabia upto Suez at the top of the Red Sea. Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-246 B. C.) took measures to improve Red Sea area and made trading smooth. Three ports at Arsinoe, Myos Hormos and Berenice were a connected with Nile by desert road. There was international emporium at Alexandaria.

The diplomatic exchange between the Ptolemies and the Mauryas was a sequel to the regular commerce between India and Egygt. Athenaeus describes the presence of Indian women, animal and spices in the procession of Philadelphus and that proves a close connection between the countries. According to Strabo, Myos Hormos was a great centre of Indian trade. By the second century B. C., Ptolemies had monopolised trade in Indian merchandise and therefore Eudoxus attempted to circumnavigate Africa to avoid the Ptolemies. He had already visited India before that with the help of Indian of Alexandaria. Arabs acted as intermediaries between East and the West and in the first century A. D. commercial activities between India and Arabia were brisk. Egyptians encouraged direct trade with India.

Hippalus.

Hippalus (the discoverer of monsoon) made his maiden voyage to India right across the Arabian sea by observing the location of the parts and conditions of the seas. His date varies between mid-second century B. C. to the first century A. D. His discovery gave impetus to trade between India and the west. He was the pilot of the voyage organised by Euergetes II (146-117 B. C.),

India found a ready market in the west. Augustus took measures to enforce peace in the Mediterranean world and that helped smooth trading between India and Rome. Pliny complains that India alone absorbs from Romn £425000 by selling merchandies at a hundred times its original cost. Various missions visited the court of Augustus. The Pandya king sent presents and gifts to him. Weima Kadphises started trading with Roman Orient after conquering India. We have references to various sets of Indian visitors to Rome from Augustus to Constantine. Commercial connections with India caused a shocking drain on Roman resources and Vespasian (69-79 A.D.) urged his people to cultivate simple habits of the plebeians.

The Roman trade declined after 180 A. D. The *MBH* also has a reference to Rome.

Periplus refers to trade relations between India and **Ethiopia** and with certain other parts of East African coasts. We learn from Agatharcides that the Indian traders regularly visited Aden. There was a full fledged Indian settlement at Alexandaria. Ancient Tamil literature refer to foreign settlements in South India and there were also pockets of foreign traders in North-Westera India.

Silk Trade.

The trade routes between North-Western frontier and China met in Bactria and Chiang-Kien's report (second century B. C.) to the Chinese emperor, Wu Ti, is the first Chinese account regarding trade between India and Bactria. India's acquaintance with central Asia is evident from the *MBH*. India's relations with these parts were established through trading activities. For trade the northern route was probably more important as silk passed through it to Bactria. The increasing relation with outside world through the silk trade brought this area more and more under political and military control. The Indian cultural importance or influence in the Tarim basin was a bye-product of Sino-Indian relations. Chinese introduced silk, vermillion and bamboo. The turmoil following the nomadic conquest of Bactria disrupted silk trade along with other trade for sometime. Chiang Kien noted the possibility of route to Bactria via India. The trans-Asian silk routes were not always smooth because the areas were under different political authorities.

A large part of the silk trade soon deviated from the traditional route and according to Periplus, it was brought overland through Bactria to Barygaza and by way of the Ganges to the Coromondel coast. The silk route was further helped by the consolidation of the Kushan empire. Periplus refers to the importance of Chinese silk. From Ptolemy we learn of the existence of a road from China to India going through Pataliputra, Yunnan, Burma and Assam and also via Tibet and Sikkim. Chinese silk was brought to Patliputra and thence to Tamralipti. *Milindapanha* mentions sea voyage to China and there was a regular maritime trade between the Ganges Valley and China.

The *Brhatasamhita* mentions the prosperity and adversity of sea-borne trade, of shipping and sea faring merchants. Fahien refers to the perils of the central Asian routes. He says that only by observing sun, moon and stars was it possible to go forward.

India had good trade relations with Ceylon as it enjoyed a strategic position commanding the sea routes that linked one side of the Ocean with the other. Ceylon played a distinct role both in foreign trade and in inter-oceanic commerce between the east and the west. The details are available from the accounts of Cosmas. Sindh, Gujerat, Kalyan, Malabar, Manglore, Tamralipti, had maritime relations with Ceylon, Persia, Arabia, Ethiopia, Byzantine empire, China and the Islands of the Indian Ocean. Ceylon was frequented by ships from all parts of India. Ceylon received silk, aloes, cloves, sandal wood and other products from India. Tracers coasting round India from Bharukacha in the west to Suvarnabhumi in the east and touching on the way a port at Ceylon. Voyages were to and from Tamralipti. Fahien went to Ceylon from Tamralipti. Varahamihir mentions Ceylon along with Tamraparni, Pandya, Saurastra and other regions as the home of good pearls from Oysters. Fahien noticed collection of pearls from Ceylon. Silver was imported from Ceylon to India. According to Kalhana, Ceylonese cloth was worn by Kashmiri women. Ceylon also produced fine muslin.

Commercial relations with China was equally flourishing. Precious stones and muslins went to China from India. There were Indian colonies between Burma and China. Itsing refers to more than ten such colonies and it was through China that Indian art and crafts entered Japan. Various kinds of saffrons and aromatics were exported to Tibet, China and Cambodia. Pepper mas exported to Iran. Chinese silk flowed into western markets through Indian traders. Maritime relation with Byzantine empire was there. In his Law Digest, Justinian gives a long list of imported articles. He fixed eight pieces of gold for one pound of silk and this law had some depressive effect on the silk trade which had its monopoly in the hands of the Persians (according to Procopius) to whom Justinian did not like to pay Roman money. He, therefore, entered into negotation with the Ethiopians. He brought some eggs of silk worm to Byzantium and broke the monopoly of the Persian and the Indians. When the Byzantium began to produce silk, silk trade in India declined. The balance of trade in the Gupta period was in favour of India.

The representation of ships and boats at Ajanta afford a vivid testimony to foreign trade which is further confirmed by the contemporary literary works hinting at the flourishing condition of shipping ship-buildings and the development of sea-borne trade. The *Brhatsamhita* refers to the existence of shippers and sailors as a class whose health is said to be influenced by the moon. Another reference to stellar influences affecting the fortune of traders, physicians, shippers and the like is also there. There is also a reference to a particular conjunction of stars affecting merchants and sailors. There is a further reference to the existence of a class of small shippers confined to inland navigation. It also refers to sea sickness, place for an auspicious seabath, the sea-port where there is a great flow of gold due to multitude of merchantmen arriving in safety after disposing off exports abroad. Harsha's *Ratnavali* relates to the story of Ceylonese princess being shipwrecked in the mid-Ocean and brought thereby the merchants of Kausambi. Dandi refers to a merchants visiting the island of Kalavan and while returning after marrying a girl is shipwrecked. He further refers to Mitragupta who goes on board a Yavana ship. Hiuentsang says that the people of Saurashtra derived their livelihood from the sea by engaging in commerce. A prince of Gujerat went to Java etc.

In Sindh, the Debal port was known to the Arabs and the prosperity of the city was due to the volume of trade which was conducted through its port. Ships of Oman, China and India met at this port which was in a flourishing condition till the end of the 12th Century A.D. Somnath, washed on three sides by sea, was also a port. Cambay was the principal port of Gujerat and Broach also continued to exist as a port for a longer period. By the 9th century

A.D., there was regular sailing to China. Ships of China used to go to Oman, Shiraff, Basra and there was route from Persian Gulf to China. Tamralipti continued to be a great port. The maritime activities of the Arabs in the Indian Ocean attained a high water-mark by the 9th century A.D. and the Arabs after collecting materials from India proceeded to China and other parts of South-East Asia.

Ports.

(i) **Bharukacha**—It was the Barygaza of the Romans and Broach of later times. Merchants from Benares and other parts of Eastern country went to Bharukacha and from there sailed either to Eastern regions like Suvarnabhumi or to Alexandaria in the west.

(ii) **Roruva**—Or Roruka (capital of Sauvira). It was accessible by sea. It came to be known as Minanagar and on account of its commercial importance was given prominence in the Periplus. The Roman, Egyptians, Persians and the Arabs used to come from Ommana, first to Barbaricum and then to Minanagar.

(iii) **Supparaka**—Is to be identified with Suraparak of the *MBH*. According to Periplus, it was next to Barygaza. It is identified with Sopara of Ptolemy which was once the capital of Aparanta (north Konkan).

(iv) **Kaveripattana**—It is mentioned by Ptolemy and in *Silapaddikaram* It is described as a great market city in the *Manimekhalai*. From here one could travel by road to Madura. It had commercial contacts with Ceylon from where it received imports. Its beacon-lights were raised to guide ships to reach the shore. Dandin refers to it as a city on the right bank of the Kaveri.

(v) **Dantapur**—It lay in the kingdom of Kalinga and was possibly its capital. It is mentioned as a city of royal residence in one of the inscriptions of the Gangas. It was a place of political and commercial importance for about a thousand years.

Besides there were various other small ports (already refered earlier) on the Western and Eastern coasts of the country. The ports of call for traders from Apologos and Oman to India were first

Barygaza and then Barbaricum with its Scythian metropolis of Minanagar. Then beyond the river Sindhu, there was Rann of Cutch from which portruded the gulf of Baraca (Dwarka). Beyond this was the famous port of Barygaza, and the coast of Ariaca (North Konkan).

The *Silapaddikaram* (5th century A.D.) relates how in the streets of the Pandyan capital at Madura entered with the East wind ... a fleet of high broad ships carrying different kinds of articles. The other ports of importance were Kaveripattnam, Dantapur, Masalia in the Andhra Pradesh, Tamluk in Bengal and others. Masalia is identified with Masulipattam. Fahien travelled from Benares to Champa (Bhagalpur) in a ship and from there to Tamluk and then to Ceylon. Itsing mentions Tamluka as a port and he embarked from here in his return journey to China. Hiuentsang describes Dantapur as a port in Orissa. The *Manimekhalai* (sixth century A.D.) describes the sea route from Madura to Java.

Overland route.

The overland route was also maintained for trade and other purposes. Carvans regularly passed between Khorasan and Sindh through Kabul and Bamiyan etc. Masudi mentions an overland route from the country of Sindh to Tibet and China. There was also another route by Jhelum, Rawalpindi, Attock, and Peshawar. Alberuni reached India through Kabul.

Hiuentsang came to Samarkand and proceeding along the banks of the Oxus, reached Tokhara, Termuz and then to Balkh and travelling further south he came to Bamiyan and from there to Kafiristan and then to India. In the east a route connected Pundravardhan with Kamrup and it ran eastward to South China through the 'hills of Assam and Upper Burma. There was another land route from Tonkin to Kamrup and from there it came to Pundravardhan and from there it had to be crossed to reach Kajangal and finally to Magadha. Route through the passes of Himalayas past Sikkim and Chumbi valley extended to Tibet and China.

India had flourishing trade relations with Ceylon, South-east Asia and China. Ceylon was renowned for its pearls and gems, transparent stones, muslins, tortoise shells etc. It was known as *Tambapanni* which was visited by merchants in their ships. While in the West, India had to contend against Arab and Roman traders, the field lay practically open to them in the South-East Asia. Large ships sailed from the Chola ports to Suvarnabhumi. In the second century A.D., a regular sea route was in operation. Voyages of daring Indian merchants to Suvarnabhumi and Suvarnadwip are mentioned in the *Jatakas*, *Avadanasataka*, *Brhatakathamanjari* etc., and also in the writing of the Chinese writers of the 3rd century A.D.

Indian kingdoms had begun to be formed in those areas from the first century A.D. onwards and the friendly intercourse led to increased commercial relations. It was the quest of gold that drew Indian merchants across the seas to Indo-China and Indonesia. South India had commercial relations with China as early as the latter half of the second century B.C. In the second half of the first century A.D., the sea route to China was known. Trade relations between East India and South West China by way of upper Burma and Yunnan existed as early as second century B.C. In the first century A. D. there was a regular overland trade in Chinese raw silk as well as silk yarn and silk cloth. India served as an intermediary in trade between Yunnan and Bactria in the second century B.C. The Kushan empire led to the growth of favourable condition to the fostering of Indian trade with central Asia and beyond. A powerful stream of colonies from North-West India flowed into Khotan where Prakrit became the language af administration.

(c) Trade Laws :—

The *Arthashashrea* and the *Smritis* prescribed various laws for the regulation of trade. According to Baudhayan the king should levy just duties on marketable goods according to their intrinsic values without oppressing the traders. According to Narad, no arbitrary imposts are to be realised from merchants who come from distant countries for gain. Since *Vartta* upheld the universe, the concept of royal duty to encourage and protect trade developed. They should be protected because they increased national wealth. We learn from the *Jatakas* that ruters won over the traders by fixing just and equitable taxes. *Sulka* was one of the principal sources of income to the state. Those who passed beyond the flag without paying tolls was to be fined eight times the amount of tolls due from them. According to Kautilya, each of the three categories of merchandise, internal, external and foreign, was liable to payment of tolls alike when exported or imported.

Kautilya had laid down rules for the regulation of trade between different parts of the country. The system of centralisation was developed by Kautilya for proper distribution. Commodities of frequent demand shall not be subject to centralisation. It was the duty of the *Sannidhatri* to mark the fluctuations in demand and in prices of local and foreign articles. Since he realised the commercial duties, it was his duty to raise the rate of taxation accordingly. A number of officers were engaged by the state for the regulation of trade and commerce. Besides the number of superintendents mentioned by Kautilya, we have reference to *Saulkika, Gaulmika. Ayuktaka, Gamabhojakas* etc., connected with trade. The *Hirahadagalli Plate* of Sivaskandavarman (*EI*—I.p. 5) mentions the custom house officers. The *Bihar Stone Pillar Inscription* of Skandagupta refers to a royal officer known as *Gaulmika.*

Important industries commanding wide market abroad were kept under the State control, for example, Saffron in Kashmir, fine cloth and wool in the East, horses in the West, precious stones and pearls in the South and elephants everywhere. Fishery, according to Periplus, was worked by condemned criminals. According to Pliny from the Salt range of Ormenus between the Indus and Hydaspes, a great revenue accrues to the sovereigns of the country than they drive from gold and pearls. Minerals and salt were state monopoly. Salt was a royal monopoly under the Pallavas and special license had to be obtained for private manufacture. Adulteration of salt was severely punished. The *Poona and Ridhanpur Plates* of Prabhavatigupta (*EI*-XV., p. 42) and the *Siwani and Chamak Copperplates* (*CII*-238/246) of Pravarasena II rerfer to the absolute monopoly of the State over mines and forests. Even Sugar, under Sivaskandavarman (*EI*-I, p. 6) was manufactured by the State.

Since maritime trade was an important source of revenue, the Scythian State brough the maritime trade under its control. The Periplus bears a clear testimony to such a direct control of the king over imports and their proper distribution. It records not only the state control of overseas trade but also the fact that the state extended necessary protection to foreign ships at Broach against extreme dangers of tidal bores and to cargoes from the hands of pirates. Shipping was one of the important industries in charge of the State. Ships touching the harbours on their way may be requested to pay toll but pirate ships must be destroyed. It was the duty of the State to keep roads safe and the *Antapalas* extended protection to Caravans. Exemptions of tolls were granted to Srotriyas.

There were laws to check speculation, competition, hoarding and adulterations. The state regulated buying and selling with an eye to the good of the people. Haggling was not uncommon. Barter was replaced by the use of currency and gradually prices were fixed in terms of money. While in the *Jatakas* we see that there were no fixed prices, Kautilya provides for the regulation of both the price and the profit of merchants. Kautilya also framed rules to contain smuggling. The *Brhatsamhita* mentions the cases of extraordinary rise or fall in the prices of foodgrains and Varahmihir portrays a fine picture of dealer.

The declining state of trade and commerce in the post—Gupta period is reflected in the decline of the class of merchants and traders. The Chandella and Oriya landgrants and also the *Skandapurana* refer to the transfer of merchants along with others to the donees. According to the *Skandapurana*, the merchants would decline in the Kali age and they would be dependent on *rajaputra* chiefs. Traders and merchants came under the control of landed aristocrats. A few charters refer to the settlement of traders and merchants and some of them empowered the traders even to exact forced labour (*EI*-XXX.164-81; *JESHO*-II. 281-93; *CII*-IV. Nos. 31, 32). These records belong to the coastal regions of Western India and these charters reflect the complexion of feudal grants. The decline of trade is reflected in the attempt at the revision of social values. The undertaking of sea voyage is forbidden in the Kali age

(Kane-III.) and that reveals the growing trend of insularity and localism. Inspite of it the coastal trade with distant regions continued. Puri, Kalinga. Banpur, Rameshwara, Lanka, Laccadives, Patan etc. continued as centres of trade.

V

Export and Import

The '*Periplus af the Erythraean Sea*' contains an account of South India via the coastline of South Arabia and Western India in the first century A.D. Erythraean sea is the name given by the Greek and the Romans to the Indian Ocean including Red Sea and Persian Gulf. The writer had the personal experience of ports, market towns, exports and imports. His name is unknown. He made a voyage from Red Sea to India. It is a valuable and trustworthy account of the early trade and maritime activities between India and Western world and is a narrative based on personal experience. It reveals an astonishingly detailed geographical knowledge of Red Sea, Arabian, East African and Indian coasts. Ptolemy used it and he described India upto and beyond the Ganges. Strabo's '*Geography*' and Pliny's '*Natural History*' are equally importent. Periplus is a guide book for merchants. It mentions a varieties of articles in addition to well known cereals, textile, gems, precious stones and a number of Indian drugs and perfumes. India has a great abundance of rivers and her seas ebb and flow with the tides of extraordinary strength which increase with the moon both when new and when full.

Items of Export Included—

Ivory, tortoise shell, rhinoceros, costus, spice, bdellium, gum, emerald, green stones, sapphires, furs from China (Serika), Cotton, silk, thread, indigo, spikenard, porcelain, pepper, betel, etc. Periplus indicates the presence of Indian traders, sailors and agents along the coasts of Arabia and Africa. They were not much enterprising and there was also regulation against sea travelling (*Manu-III.* 158). The mercantile coastal peoples of India were held in low esteem by the rest of the countrymen. Manu's law had never any appeal for the coastal people. They found regular customers at their doors and hence did not feel incentive to leave the shore. Export articles included—(i) plant products, (ii) animal products, and (iii) mineral products.

Theophrastus (3rd century B.C.) makes a mention of the useful plant products of India viz. cardamon, Cassia Cinnamon, nard, pepper, ginger grass, citron, lentil, cotton, jack fruit, bananas, mango, ebony etc. Sesame oil and seeds were also known to the West from India. Plant products included sugar, indigo, licium, various kinds of woods.; cotton products, root of costus, aloes, gum cocoanut, melon, peach, appricot, rice, millet etc. Pepper was in heavy and constant demand and its use as an ingredient for preparing medicine goes back to the time of Hippocrates (5th centuryB.C) who refers to an Indian medicine of pepper used for diseases of women and also for eye disease. The demand for Cinnamon was high. Cotton had an overseas market. Inspite of its fineness, it never became a rival to Chinese silk in Western markets. Frank incense, gum resins etc. were also exported. Aromatic plants from Kashmir were used for perfumes and berberry, a cosmetic, fashionable in Rome, was also exported. Plant products were also exported from the Western ports.

Indian beasts and birds like elephant, rhinoceros, lion, tiger, hound, monkey, python, parrot, peacock, fowl etc. were brought as presents. Indian cows and dogs were in the procession of Ptolemy Philadelphus. Exhibitions of Indian animals specially of tigers were often organised in Rome. Fancy birds were exported. Elephants were in demand for use in war after Alexander. Representation of Indian animals are found in the Western works of art. Periplus export list does not include animal. Export of animal products consisted of ivory, wool, hide, fur, silk, lac, pearl, oyster, shell, conchshell, tortoise shell, *ghee* and musk. Virgil and Horace refer to ivory from India. An ivory image of *Lakshmi* was found at Pompei and is in the style of Mathura school of art under the Kushanas.

Mineral products brought enough foreign money to the country. The Romans were found of gems of which the greatest bulk had to be brought from India. Diamond and beryl were costly gems and are mentioned in Pliny, the *MBH* and the *Junagadh Rock Inscription* of Rudradaman. The following stones were exported from India—

agate, carnelian, oryx, sard, nicolo, amethyst, rock crystal, opal, ruby sapphire, garnet, emerald, lapislazuli, zircon, tourmalines, jade, etc.

Pliny says that trickery was practised in this trade with greatest benefit. For export, Indians procured stones from other countries also. India's rival in this trade was Arabia. Pliny holds that India was the most prolific country in producing gems. He specially refers to the Ganges and the Chenab where gems were found but that only shows the limitation of his information. Indian iron and steel earned a reputation since the fifth century B. C. Iron of the best quality was sent to the West. The intermediaries in this trade maintained secrecy. Pliny and Periplus refer to the export of gold and copper.

Sindh had seven mouths. Commodities were brought from Ujjain to Bharukacha for the supply of the country and also for exports. Periplus mentions Tamils, Gedrosia, Nahapana, Saka, Abhira, Chola, Satkarni etc , and also Rann of Cutch, Indus Ujjain, Bhrgukacha, Saurastra, Narmada (Mahi), Gandhar, Kandhar, Pushkalavati, Kashmir, Hindukush, Daksinapath, Paithan, Sopara, Kalyan, Goa, Cananore, Kottayam, Cape Comorin etc. He mentions a number of ports in different parts of the country which were used both for exports and imports.

Literary sources and surviving remains enable us to make out a list of objects of trade between India and the Roman world. The testimony of Roman writers and of extant mosaics and gems show a knowledge of at least three species of Indian parrots. Indian ivory was in great demand in Rome. The use of silken garment was common. Pliny included silk in his list of the most valuable commodities while emperor Aurelian declared it to be worth its weight in gold. The Indians acted as intermediaries in Chinese silk trade with the West. Silk sent from China diverted from the great West Asian route southwards to the mouth of the Indus and the Gulf of

Cambay for export to the West. Aromatics, spices, and other plants products increased enormously in the trade list and an old Tamil poem called it the *"passion of the Yavanas"*. Indian steel is included in a list of dutiable articles at Alexandaria in a *Digest* of the Roman Law. Warmingtion observes—"We find in Augustan literature Indian lions, tigers, rhinoceroses; elephants and serpents already brought for exhibition though rarely; Indian parrots kept as pets; Indian ivory and tortoise shell employed for all kinds of orgaments; oriental pearls and Chinese silk worn by women of the country...aromatics spices...ginger, sugar and aloes;...Indigo as a paint, cotton used for clothing, ebony for furniture, rice as cereal, wide used of Indian precious stones etc."

Economic consequences on the Roman Empire.

The exports had serious repercussions on Roman finance. Pliny called it a drain on his country. India drained Roman money to the tune of £.22000000 per year. According to Tacitus the craze for jewel drained the empire of its weath. According to Dion Chrysostom, the foreigners levied tribute for the Roman subjects not in land or cattle but through Roman foolishness. Emperor Tiberius also protested against this fruitless expenditure. Roman wealth indirectly supported the enemies of Rome like Parthia and Persia. Both these nations had commercial relation with India at different period of her economic history. Persia was the carrier of Indian goods between the East and the West.

As early as the First Century A.D., Rome was faced with certain problems. The variety of Roman women and upper class people was solely responsible for the ceaseless demand for Indian precious stones and musline. The thirst for Eastern luxuries continued for nearly three centuries. To check it Julius Caesar introduced certain reforms. He imposed a tarrif on foreign manufacture and restricted wearing of certain types of dress and ornaments. Despite these measures, thirst for Eastern luxuries continued unabated. Even Nero realised the urgency of curbing this endless expenditure but the restrictions prescribed by him were meant for common people and not for him.

According to Pliny the balance of trade was in favour of India. The Roman gold enriched the alien nations and the goods imported were not worth the gold paid for them. Pliny refers to the total and and actual cost in respect of all exports from the East. Gibbon described the exports from the East as splendid and trifling. According to Periplus a great quantity of coin came to South India. Imports received by Rome from India, being so very expensive, might have been largely responsible for the adverse balance of trade against Rome.

Items of Import.

Articles of import were very few compared with the Indian goods going abroad. In Periplus we find the inventories of commodities entering India through the Western ports. The excavations at Taxila also supply information on this point. Damask, garments of poor quality, girdle of damask, wine, storax, frank incense, sweet clothes and Papyrus were imported through western ports. According to Pliny, textile products came from Alexandaria. Wine was imported from Italy, Arabia and other places but Italian variety was preferred. Storax came from Egypt and Syria. It was an ingredient for medicine. Sweet Clover came from Crete, Greece and Italy. It was also used for making garlands. According to Pliny garland of sweet clovers was re-exported from India to Rome. From Arabia and East Africa came frank incense. Tarn holds that Papyrus was imported but we know that Indian *Bhojapatra* was exported outside India. Documents on *Bhojapatra* have been found in Khotan. According to Pliny, Indians were found of Mediterranean red Corals. These were worn as amulets to ward off danger. The supply came from Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica, coasts of Italy, Spain and North Africa. The import of this material continued for centuries.

Copper, tin and lead were imported by the Sakas and Satvahanas for their mints. Medicinal properties were imported from Arabia. A gem known as Chrysolithos was imported through Western ports according to Periplus. Red sea was the source of this gem. Amber was also imported. Foreign gold and silver coins were exchanged with local money at a profit. It had no perceptible influence on the economic life of Western India as in the South. Yavan girls were also imported. According to Periplus, slave skilled in music and good looking virgins were brought to the market town in Barygaza. In the plays of Bhasa and Kalidas and in Tamil literature yavana occasionally featured around the king. Fragments of Roman sherds, wares, lamps, have been found at Arikamedu. A bronze statue of Neptune and a bronze jug have been found near Kolhapur, Akola near Baroda and fragments of Graceo-Roman pottery have been found at Nevasa. Western Industrial products found a market in Deccan and in coastal areas of Malabar and Coromondal and Western manufactured articles have been found at Taxila.

Items of Import included cloth, linen, transparent stone, yellow copper, soft copper, iron, sharp blades, dresses of skin, flowered cotton, yellow stones, Topaz, vessels, coral, wine, brass, copper, tincture for eyes, instruments of music, girls for harem, singing boys etc.

Because of comparatively small Indian demands for the products of the Roman empire, the latter suffered a perpetually adverse balance of trade so that Roman gold and silver coin in large quantities was transferred to India to make up the deficit. Roman dames decked themselves in seven folds of Indian muslin, paraded the streets and became such a menace to the city's moral that the Senate intervened and laid an embargo upon the import of that fine stuff from India. Roman trade continued down to the sixth century A.D. Chess from India reached Persia.

Review.

Panini describes traders as *Vanik* or *Vanija*. These terms applied to traders without reference to caste. Merchants were named after the nature of business.

Kraya-Vikraya or whose main occupation was buying and selling, *Vasnika*, a merchant who invested his own money in business;

Samsthanika, a member of the commercial guild, *Prastarika*, who dealt in minerals, they were also known after the articles they dealt with and from the place they visited for their business, *Viz. Asvaniya*, *Gandharvavanija*, *Kashmirvanija*, *Madravanija* etc. They visited distant provinces or parts cf the country on business point to inland trade activities. They went from one part of the country to another and brisk inland trade is indicated. Importance of both foreign and inland trade has been emphasised. There was the presence of a large intrepot and it could not have been possible without the presence of a considerable fleet of merchantmen for transport by sea and mighty caravans for similar purposes by land.

The nature of trade seems to have changed gradually and with the passage of time both in value and volume and there must have been a favourable balance of trade when India exported a variety of goods. Purchase and sale were regulated. The *Yuktikalpataru* is a sanskrit work on industrial products. The Indian shipping was expanded to reach all the known ranges. Trade became the strongest economic factor in urban life and state intervention became a reality.

The lucrative industries were kept under State monopoly—like mines and salt. Sometimes it extended control over the whole of foreign trade and strictly regulated the distribution of imports, for example, the Scythians of the West in the first century A.D. The Sakas not only controlled the overseas trade but also gave it necessary protection. They made Bhrgukacha a safe harbour. The king also protected trade from pirates. Taxes connected with trade were—

(i) *Sulka*—toll or custom
(ii) *Vartani*—Cess or road cess
(iii) *Ativahaka*—conveyance cess
(iv) *Gulmadeya*—tax for protection against brigandage.
(v) *Taradeya*—Ferry charge

(vi) *Bhukta*—subsistence of merchants and his followers-

(vii) *Bhaga*—share of profit.

The officers of the State had to observe that the foreign merchants were granted certain concessions but not spared in cases of offences Facilities for their commerce and personal safety had to be provided. Imports continued for centuries. There was administrative machinery to look after the foreigners. Favours were shown to those who imported foreign goods, mariners and merchants who imported foreign merchandise. State took particular care to expand foreign trade by means of controlling export and import. The policy continued for a pretty long time as is evident from the charter of Visnusena (592 A.D.). Exemptions were also granted to encourage foreign trade.

CHAPTER—10

GUILD SYSTEM

The development of Guild system is an interesting feature of ancient Indian economic history. In the evolution of the system we find that originally it was a grouping of the persons following the same profession, then occupation and craft became hereditary in families, later the group following hereditary avocation formed a monopoly of its trade by making the guild a close corporation. Localisation was one of the established characteristics of economic corporations. It was natural outcome of a social instinct. From the point of economic theory, guilds can be divided into five categories.

(i) Guilds as joint commercial undertaking with capital of their own *Samgha*;

(ii) Guild of skilled workmen who were supplied materials by capitalists and were paid according to their outturn;

(iii) Guilds of lower class artisans;

(iv) Guilds of various grades of menials and low class workmen;

(v) Guilds of men of various profession, workmen, etc. Guilds of all types played a very important part in the national economy and helped the growth of national wealth.

The beginnings of corporate life may be traced to very early times e. g. the *Ganas* and *Vratas* of *Rigveda* signify the existence of corporate activities. *Ganapati* was the chief of the *Ganas*. According to Roth, *Gana* was used in the sense of a guild: *Gana* and *Puga* seem to have been used synonymously. Panini groups the *Gana*, *Puga*, *Samgha* and *Vrata* together. According to Katyayan, a group of merchants was a *Puga*, corporation of brahmanas was known as *Gana* and guilds of craftsmen were called *Srenis*. Panini refers to *Ayudhajivisamgha* (association of soldiers) which were called *Kastriyasreni* by Kautilya. *Ayudhajivinas* correspond to *Sastropajivina*

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of Kautilya. The *Ramayana* refers *Srenimukhyas* and the *MBH* to the *Srenibala.* The earliest reference may be traced to the *Panis* of the *Rigveda* who went out in caravan as traders and the *Panvasidhis* (performed by the Vaisyas) of the *Grhvasutras* implying success in trade. *Sreni, Kula, Puga, Gana, Jati, Vrata, Samgha, Samudaya, Samuha, Parisat, Varga, Sartha, Naigama, Sambhuyasamutham,* are terms closely connected with the growth of industry, trade and guilds.

Quite a number of guilds can be traced in the various *Jatakas* themselves which refer to eighteen guilds. Gautama makes a reference to guilds of cultivators, trader, herdsmen, moneylenders and artisans. According to Gautam they had the authority to lay down rules for their respective classes. According to Gautama, the guild too had its own sphere of sovereignty. Kautilya also refers to the guilds and mentions various guilds of workmen, artisans, weavers, washermen, merchants etc. The majority of the artisans were self employed people or were visiting houses of customers. The most prevalent type of combined enterprises of crafts were those organised *Srenis* or guilds which formed a long standing institution in India. In many literary texts there are references to corporations or organised bodies of craftsmen and traders and the relationship between the employer and the employees is systematically laid in the Budhist literature-, viz. *Mahavastu* (III. 442-43)-, where thirtysix kinds of workers are mentioned; *Milindapanha* (where seventy four knds of occupations are mentioned); *Dighanikava* (II. 50) where twentyfour kinds of trade are mentioned) and *Jatakas* which refer to eighteen types of guilds, for example.

Workers in stones, ivory, pottery, weaving, dyeing, jwellery, leather, hunters, butchers, fishermen, confectioner, trappers, cooks, barbers, florists' sailor, basket makers etc.

Industry in ancient India was organised both by the State and by the private initiative and there *Rajasilpinas* and *Rajakumbhakaras.* Industrial combines are termed as guild. The Budhist evidences refer to eighteen types but there is no authoritative enumeration of these crafts. It was probably a total conventional number. The guilds were both industrial and commercial-industrial type included guilds of weavers, potters, makers of hydraullic engines, oil millers, braziers, and bamboo workers.

Different professions were well organised to prescr be their own laws and look after their own interests. Condition of the members of the guild was quite prosperous. These represented organised bodies of trade and crafts. Lawgivers like Gautama and Vasistha state that every organisation had their own laws. *Puga* and *Samgha* have cooperative counotation but they had more political and administrative significance than economic. According to Manu (VII; 127-28), the State was expected to keep a watch over the condition of craftsmen·

Jainism and Budhism also helped the development of guilds. From the *Jatakas*, it is evident that there was a complete localisation of trade and industry and different occupations became highly specialised. The egalittarian principles of Jainism and Budhism received the support of the merchants and artisans and tended to increase their power and authority. The interests of artisans and merchants were greatly served by these heterodox-religion. Two of the guild leaders were included among the Kosala *Mahamatras*. Guilds were represented at the royal courts.

Even the growing centralisation under the Mauryas had to accept their constitution and privileges. Gautama confirms it (XI. 21-22). Kautilya wants the customs and regulations of the *Srenis* to be ascertained and recorded in the official document. There is a strong tendency to exploit, in the interest of the kings or rulers, the types of industrial and other associations called *Samgha* or *Sreni* which had become rich and powerful bodies. In Manu and Yajnavalkya, the custom of *Srenis* and associated bodies are put on the same level with regional caste and family-customs which had gained the force of law in the early *Dharmasutras*. The obligation to follow the custom of one's own *Sreni* in invested with a high moral sanction. The *Srenis* played a new role in the capacity of trustees for pious and charitable endowments.

Sreni.

Sreni is defined as a corporation of people belonging to the same or different castes but following the same trade or industry. It has also been described as a company of merchants, bankers and artisans, an association of merchants and husbandmen and actors. 'Sreni' in Manu, as explained by Medhatithi, means alternatively a guild of merchants, of Brahmanas learned in four Vedas. To Mitaksara, it is a community of those who earn their living by selling a particular kind of vendibles or practising a particular craft. The bond that united them was the common occupation. Narad uses the term in the sense of an assemblage of eminent merchants and also a company of traders and others. Kautilya uses it as guilds of workmen and of those who carry on cooperative work. Vijnaneswara contrasts *Puga* with *'Sreni'* by stating that the basis of the former association was residence in the same locality irrespective of castes and professions followed by the members (of the *Puga*) while the *Sreni* was definitely a vocational organisation consisting of a group of people belonging to different castes but following the occupation of one single caste. He cites an example of *Sreni*—the association of weaver, shoe-makers and betel sellers. The *Smritichandika* declares that when *Samuhas* like *Srenis* fail to decide a case unanimously, they should appoint an executive committee consisting of two, three or five *Karyachintakas* and *Hitavadinas*.

Sreni and *Puga* pass as commercial and industrial guilds. *Sreni* is an assembly of persons following a common craft, a guild of workmen or a military clan, or communities of Saurastra, Kamboja and Ksatriyas who subsist by agriculture, trade and military service. It helped the consolidation of caste system based on profession. *Puga* is a craft or trade guild according to the commentators of Yajnavalkya and Narada. Acording to Brhaspati the earliest impulse to combination was due to anarchy and insecurity. According to Kautilya trades were segregated and naturally combination was their strength.

(i) Merchants trading with scents were to settle in the Eastern quarter of the town;

(ii) Traders in cooked rice in Southern quarters;
(iii) Artisans and sudras in the Western quarters;
(iv) Smiths and Brahmanas in the Northern quarters;

It should be noted here that this plan of Kautilya is not accepted in the *Agnipurana* and *Mavamata*. We find even the roads named after crafts in Benares.

Guild is characteristic of an advanced stage of economic progress. From the epigraphic sources we have references to guilds of architects, blacksmiths, jwellers, perfumers, barbers, dyers etc. The guilds of traders had to lead caravans. A verse in the *Harivamsa* describes the pavillion of various guilds. Kalidas refers to a guild of architects. He has also used *Naigama* in the sense of guilds. The *Brhatasamhita* and *Brhtjataka* also refer to guilds. The artisans were held in high esteem by kings like Jayanath and Sarvanath. The heads of industrial guids commanded great respect and we learn from the *Deopara Inscription* of Vijayasena that Sulpani, the head of the artisans of Varendra, received the title of *Ranaka* from the king.

The guilds were independent and they had their own charters. The artisans who belonged to a given guild were obliged to abide by the charter and when necessary the guild would come out in support of its members. Guilds, in course of time, became more sophisticated. Artisans' association played an important role in early Indian economic life and the state endeavoured to place its activities under its control. The guilds were able to draw up contracts with individuals and even enter into agreements with central authorities. The state tried to establish control over activities; demanded that they register and forbade them to transform from one region of the country to another without notifying the authorities. The position held by the guilds was so strong that even Kautilya could not ignore them and recommended extra privileges to their members (II.4). The king is advised to borrow money from them in times of stringency (V. 2). Manu (VIII.41) and Yajnavalkya (II.193) suggest that the royal power should honour and preserve the laws of the guilds. Property of the guild had to be protected.

The craft guilds had three characteristic—

(i) an alderman at the head
(ii) heredity of profession
(iii) localisation of industry.

The foreman of the guild is an important minister in attendance upon the king. The guild heads were known as Pramukha, Jethaka or Alderman. Individuals and families are frequently mentioned in terms of their traditional calling or organised on a hereditary basis.

Guilds had legislative, judicial and executive functions and they had the function to act as arbitrators in settling differences between the member and their wives. Gautama (XI.21) refers to their legislative functions. Guild, in that sense, is a benign institution with a long history—the organisation for safeguarding interest and avoiding competition and thereby these form an interesting study. In an ideal planning of a town separate quarters are reserved for guilds.

The guilds appear to have existed for more than fifteen hundred years, from about 600 B.C. to 1000 A. D. Places are also reserved for corporation of workmen in the cities. Trade guilds were important factors in the economic life of the people. Kautilya says (V. 2) that the unscrupulous kings exploited guilds. Guilds of workmen divided their earnings either equally or as agreed upon amongst themselves. Three commissioners enjoying the confidence of the guilds were appointed to receive the deposits which could be taken back in times of distress. Special privileges were accorded to a merchant belonging to a trade guild. Special concessions were made and respected by the state regarding law suits betweeu them. There were also joint stock companies and traders' league. All the important branches of industry formed themselves in guilds. The guilds were autonomous bodies having their own rules, regulations and bye-laws which were actually accepted and respected by the State. Disputes were settled by their own executives and failing that by the State tribunal.

The tradional eighteen guild of the *Jatakas* included goldsmiths, maker or seller of cloaks, jewel splendours, perfumers, oilmakers, makers of pot for storing *Ghee,* makers of molasses, curd makers, makers of cotton cloth, candid sugar, sweatmeats, flour dealers, grinders of barley and wheat, dealers in roots and fruits; provision dealer etc. From the inscriptions we have the following list.

Weavers, potters, hydraulic workers, wine dealers, bamboo workers, brazirs, oil millers etc.

Different guilds also federated under a common president called *Bhandagarika.*

The merchant guilds were under the *Sethis*. Several *Anusethis* and *Sethis* were organised under a *Mahasethi* (Anathapindaka was one such *Mahasethi*). The caravan traffic had also a head. The *Sethi* in a trade guild occupied a position of superiority. *Mahasethi* figures as an important personage among the officials. *Shresthi-purogah* (foreman of the guilds) also figures as an important personage among the officials. The Caravan traffic trade had also cooperative organisations under a common captain known as *Sarthavaha* and there were also *Thalaniyamaka* (landpilot) and *Jalaniyamaka* (waterpilot). Partnership was also known. The *Jethakas* the Guild Heads had attained legal sanctity and their orders had to be obeyed. They were also respected by the members.

The Epics recognise guild as one of the princinal supports of the royal power. Sowing dissensions among the heads of the guilds or inciting them to treason is looked upon as a recognised means of injuring the enemy. Manu refers to the usages of guilds of having the force of law. As a result of guild specialisation considerable proficiency had been reached in trade and industry. King was not allowed to establish any laws repugnant the rules of these guilds. The heads of the guilds are mentionen next after the priest as objects of king's anxious concern. The power of these guilds may be guessed from the fact that the epics recommended the king to circumvent them by bribery and dissension since the "safeguard of the corporation is union."

By the time of the Guptas ther guilds had acquired immense power and status and had come to play a very vital role in the economic life of the country. Narad says—"The king must maintain the usages of the guild and other corporations (X. 2-2)"...X "those who cause dissensions among the members of an association shall undergo punishment of a severe kind" (X.6). According to Yajnavalkya, a man who steals the property of the guild or breaks any agreement shall be banished from the realm and all his property confiscated (II. 186-192). Yajnavalkya holds that the guild could possess corporate property and they could lay down rules and regulations corresponding to the articles of the present day association.

Narad refers to *Samaya* (X. I) and that the duties arising from the rules and regulations (*Samavika*) must be observed with care. Some pure and virtuous men are appointed as executive officers and they often transacted their business with the court in their name and were held in high respect there; they possessed executive authority over the members of the guild and could punish anyone who disobeyd their decision; they were, however, bound by the laws and usages of the corporations and if they violated them in exercise of their authority and there was dissension between them and the general members, the king had to step in and make both parties conform to the established usage. Mitramisra takes Yajnavolkya (II. 187) to refer to the *Mukhyas* as an illustration of the right of the assembly to punish its members or chiefs. They could be relieved for any anti-guild activities. According to Mitramisra, the king should step in only when the assembly found itself unable to punish the officers. According to Narad (X. 4-6) king could forbid combinations of different associations between them. He could also prevent them from undertaking such acts as were either opposed to his wish or interests of *Or* of contemptible and immoral nature. Thus a king could interfere with them only in some specified cases, otherwise they were free to act and the king was bound to accept their decision.

According to Nārad, regular rules were laid down for the attendance of members in the assembly and the king had to approve of them. There was a guild hall for the transaction of guild business and affairs and sound of a drum was the signal for the attendance of members. The guilds also possessed judicial authority over their members. The guilds could interfere only in cases which affected the transation of their business. Guilds (*Gana*, *Sreni*, *Puga*, *Kula*) formed the ordinary courts of justice from each of which appeal lay successively to the next higher ones. Guilds were not only recognised as parts of state fabric but also their authority was upheld by that of the state. Guilds also formed parts of ordinary tribunals of the country.

The executive of the guild was to consist of a President assisted by two, three on five members. We learn from the Inore copperplate of Skanda Gupta (465) that Jiwant was the head of a guild of oilmen. Matridas was also one such head at Gadhawar.The executive officers of the guild could deal with off tending members beginning from mild censure to exulion. The king could annul the deasion of the guild. Pesons punished by the guilds could appeal to the king if the guild judgement was not in conformity with the guild laws. Security of the individual from the injusties of the guild laws was duly safeguarded. Even in cases of differences of opinion, the king intervened. The king also prevented a combination of different associations of a hostile nature. The democratic element was quite a distinguishing feature of the guild organisation Each guild had a patron deity.

S eni (guild), *Puga* (a group of merchants) and *Naigama* (a group of various inhabitants of a town) attained pre-eminence in the age of the Guptas as is evidenced by the *Smriti* laws and archaeological excavations at a number of places. A *Sreni* is to be headed by Executive officer. A high degree of administrative decentralisation is implied. The convention of *Nigama, Sreni* and *Puga* is to be re-enforced by the king and the members of the group are bound to follow their respective conventions or rules and obey king's order not conflicting with them. The Basarh and the Bhita seals have *Sreni-kulika-nigama* and *Sreni-S arthavah-kulika-nigama*.

(i) *Sresthi-Sarthavah-kulika-nigama.*
(ii) *Sresthi-Kulika-nigama.*
(iii) *Sresthi-nigama.*
(iv) *Kulika-Nigama.*
(v) *Prathama Kulika.*

Basarh has given us two hundred and seventy four sguse ali of a joint guild of bankers, traders, transport merchants having its merchants spread over a large number of towns and cities in Northern India. The most numerous among the seal inscriptions refer to the corporation or guilds of bankers, traders and merchants. The seals indicate the commercial transactions for which they were manufactured by the guilds of merchants and artisans. The sealing had disclosed the letters that were received by the provincial government of Vaisali from the different branches of this great organisation. As the great guild had its branches in a number of cities, duplicates of its seal must have existed in a number of places. It was therefore naturally felt necessary that the common seal should be used along with the seal of the president or the secretary of each local branch to authenticate its letter. Seals of Isanadas, Matridas and Gomiswamin appear in a number of cases so they must have been either the president or the secretary. The branches of these guilds also managed the affairs of the local temples. These guilds had great reputation and status and they often entered into transaction jointly with the office of the heir apparent of the great Gupta empire. The *Bihar Stone Pillar Inscription* (of 478-79) speaks of a city council headed by a guild chief of merchants of Pundravardhan. The abundance of Vaisali seals proves the great part played by the guilds in the economic life of the country and also the briskness of correspondence carried on by them.

Guilds as banks.

The guilds also performed the banking business. Kautilya speaks of the *Upanidhi* (deposits) of the guilds. The Taxila merchant guilds minted coins. In important trade centres, guilds functioned as banking institutions. Guilds also acted as custodians of donations to temples etc. The *Nasik inscriptions* clearly show the functions of ancient guilds as banks. These inscription shed interesting light on the way they used to serve the purpose of modern banks to the public. Chandragupta II, Kumaragupta and Skandagupta used these guild banks for various purposes. The guilds also served as treasury offices and were authorised to realise taxes. Cunningham holds the view that merchant guilds issued their own coins.

The guilds received permanent deposits guaranteeing regular payment of interests. Such deposits were made by the donors in

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the shape of endowments and guilds were directed to protect the interest of the deposits for the special objects which the donors had in view. The prestige of the guild as a banking organisation was very high. The guild banks provided things in kind instead of cash and the role of the guild bankers continued as late as the eleventh century A. D. The inscriptions of Usavadata mention two weavers' guilds (*Tantuvavah*) at Govardhan agreeing to pay interests. In South Indian inscriptions, *Sabhas* and *Urs* received deposits and provided stipulated objects out of interest. These assemblies acted as banks. The transactions were proclaimed and registered at the *Naigama-sabha.*

The *Mathura Inscription* of the year 28 of Huviska (A. D 119) refers to the endowment of 550 *Puranas* with two guilds of flour-makers (*Samitakaras*) and the corn dealers (*Dhanikas*) by a foreigner from Balkh on interest for specific purposes of provding food to the brahmanas. The *Bihar Stone Pillar Inscription* of Skandgupta records the creation of a permanent endowment with a guild. We have references to endowment with several guilds at Nasik for providing medicine for the sick. The weavers' guild at Mandasor was in a position to undertake the building and the repair of a temple. We learn from the *Indore Copperplate* of Skandagupta that a Brahmana, Devavisnu, deposited a certain amount of money for the perpetual maintenance of a lamp in a temple of sun with the guilds of oilmen. Even Chandragupta II depsoited *Dinaras* for endowment to alms houses and the same example was followed by his son Kumaragupta I. A guild af silk weavers built a magnificient temple of sun (437-38) as is evident from the *Mandasor Inscription* of Kumaragupta I. Brhaspati makes a special reference of the philanthrophic activities of the guild over and above their banking activities. They also made gifts.

The deposits with the guild were made under proper deeds of agreements stating the condition under which they were held. Guilds undertook in their corporate capacity works of social utility such as construction of assembly houses, shelters for drinking waters for travellers, temples, pools, gardens, helping hand to poor people in the performance of *Samskaras.* The banking aspect of the guilds continued for a long time and an inscription of the ninth century A. D. refers to the investment of 1530 drammas by a salt merchant with the distilleries of spirituous liquors (*Kallapalla*) and their chief *Mahattaka*. The *Kaman Stone Inscription* (EI-XXIV. 329 ff) records deposits of donations to be used for specific purposes. It is recorded in one of these inscriptions that the guilds of potters received a sum of money in advance and other guilds like those of gardeners, artisans etc., also functioned as banks.

The autonomy and identity of the guilds was as much legal as real and they formed one of the major supports of the royal power and also performed certain public functions. These factors give us an impression of a gradual growth and consolidation of the guild system, with local variations of course, in the vitality of nation's economy. The civil affairs of the *Nigamas* were dominated by the powerful trade and craft guilds. The Gupta period is marked by the growing activities of the guilds and their importance can be realised from the fact that both Narad and Brhaspati make specific rules for them. The were allowed perfect freedom of immigration as and when dictated by economic necessities. We learn from the *Mandasor Inscription* that a guild of silk weavers migrated in a body from *Lata* (Narmada region) to the country of Dasapur (Mandasor). Some of the members had changed their vocations from soldiering to astrology. Still they did not lose their internal cohesion and corporate spirit and were still known as silk-weavers' guild. These people were attracted by the virtues of the king of that place. They came here and learnt archery, some adopted religious life, some learnt astrology and astronomy, some poetry, some became ascetics, while others adhered to the hereditary profession of silk weaving. It built a sun temple at Dasapura in 436 A. D. It was repaired in 472 A. D. This inscription shows that the guilds were not stereotyped close corporations of crafts busy alone with their own professions but they "through the autonomy and freedom accorded to them by the law of the land, they became a centre of strength and and abode of liberal culture and progress which truly made them a power and ornament of society". The *Indore Copperplate Inscription* of Skandagupta also points to the mobile character and inherent strength of the guild.

A seal of Kumhrar proves the existence of a guild of betel leaf sellers in the Gupta period. Another inscription refers to betel leaf sellers and their chief (*Tambolikahar*). Caste and occupations sometime did not go together as there references to *Ksatriya Tailika* and a perfumer (*Gandhika*) as belonging to *Mathur* caste. The *Kaman Inscription* of the 9th century A. D. mentions two guilds of architects (*Sthapati*) and another of potters (*Kumbhkaras*) The same inscription refers to workers on conchshell (*Samkhkara*). An inscription at Gwalior (EI-I. 159) refers to the organisation of the *Sresthis* and *Sarthavaha* in 877 A. D. *Sarthavaha* was a Caravan trader who moved in group both for the inland trade and for commerce with outside world. He was a mobile class and travelled under the guidance of *Sarthavahajethaka* or *Pramukha*. Another inscription (*Ibid*., I. 184) refers to an important guild of horse dealers and a guild of horse dealers is also referred to in another inscription (EI-II. 166). The *Syadoni Inscriptian* (EI-I. 167) refers to the gifts of the guild of betel-sellers, oil-makers, and stone cutters. The guild of hunters is mentioned in the *Karitalai Stone Inscription* (EI-.II 174). Alberuni mentions fowlers, shoe-makers, jugglers, basket and shield makers as the eight classes of people who had their own guilds. They were economically as well as socially organised and were called *Antyajas*.

The commentator on Menu in the tenth century A. D. mentions guilds of artisans, tradesmen, moneylenders, coach drivers, who were economically and socially much better off. The *Deopara Inscription* of Vijayasena (EI-I. 311) refers to a guild of Stone cutters in Varendra. Each guild had a separate patron deity as its protector. *Sreni*, according to Medhatithi, means a guild of merchants, artisans and bankers and according to Govindaraj guild of merchant and husbandmen and according to Narads a guild of merchants and actors (*Manu*-VIII. 41; Narad, I. 77). Sreni was a guild of persons who earned their livelihood by the same kind of labour. Occupation was hereditary and according to to Sulaiman profession never went out of caste. Trade guilds' relation with the government was similar to those of industrial guilds. The guild finance, according to Brhaspati, comprised individual members' con-

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tribution, gift of king, profits earned and fines. The *Lakshmiswar Inscription of Vikramaditva* (EI-XIV. 190) of Western Chalukya of Badami informs us that the guild of braziers was authorised by the State to realise taxes from the people.

The laws of Narad and Brhaspati show the gradual development of guild organisation. The general assembly of a guild determined the recruitment of new members and the exclusion of old ones. Chandeshwar also supports this view. Brhaspati (XVII. 5-6) says.

"A compact formed amongst villagers, companies of artisans and associations is called an agreement; such an agreement is to be executed to provide against dangers and for the purpose of discharging their duties".

The value of cooperation lay in the facilities it affords for preventing common danger and performing a variety of objects of public utility and the helping of poor people. Regarding some of the formalities which accompanied the formation of a guild, Brhaspati says.

"Mutual confidence having first been established by means of sacred liberation, by a stipulation in writing, or by umpires, they shall set about their work" —(SBE-XXXIII. 347; XVII.7").

Then the first stage towards the orgnisation of a guild was to inspire mutual confidence and this was done by the following manner :

(i) **Kosha**—(Yajnavalkya-II. 114-15) Narad (I. 329-32).

It refers to the ordeal-the person to be tested was to drink three mouthfuls of water in which an image of deity whom he holds sacred has been bathed and worshipped. If he should meet himself with any calamity within a week or a fortnight (after having undergone the ordeal) it shall be regarded as a proof of his guilt (unfitness for membership) otherwise he would be considered pure.

(ii) **Lekh-Kriya**—This probably refers to agreement, laying down rules and regulations of the guild to which all must subscribe.

(iii) **Madhyastha**—It refers to the practice of a well known man standing guarantee for the faithful conduct of another.

Guild executives were to be selected from persons who were honest, acquainted with the Vedas and their duty, and were sprung from noble families. These executive members could deal with offending members in whatever way they liked. Heads of the executives were unfettered for Brhaspati exclusively states.

"Whatever is done by those heads of the association, whether harsh or kind towards other people, in accordance with the prescribed regulations, must be approved by the king as well for they are declared to be the appointed managers of affairs"—(XVII. 18).

The excutive officers were ultimately responsible to the assembly of the guild. When the assembly found itself unable to bring the guilty persons to book, the king had to step in or to intervene in the manner he thought fit. The king was to bring them to their duties. The democratic element is discernible in the guild organisation. There was a house for the general meeting of the guild. The new members at once shared equally with others the existing assets and liabilities of the guild. According to Chandeshwara there was freedom of speech inside the assembly.

The guilds also discharged judicial functions and there is nothing to show that its judical functions related to its members alone. They acted as ordinary courts of law. Each corporation solved its own disputes.

The important guilds were :

(i) Guilds of workmen (*Samghabhrtah*)
(ii) Guilds of artisans (*Karuka*)
(iii) Guilds of Weavers (*Tantuvaya*)
(iv) Guilds of Washermen (*Rajaka*)
(v) Guild of goldsmiths (*Suvarnakara*)
(iv) Guilds of Scavengers (*Jharaka*)
(vii) Guilds of Medical practitioners (*Bhishaja*)
(viii) Guilds of priests (*Yajaka*)
(ix) Guilds of Merchants (*Vaidehaka*)
(x) Soldier-guilds (*Kshatrivasreni*)

(xi) Miscellaneous corporations and local cooperative (*Samuthavikadanssamayanubandhah*)

(xii) Brahmana guilds (*Dwijagana*)

(xiii) Oil guilds (*Tailaseni*)

(xiv) Elephant-Rider's guild (*Mahavata*)

(xv) *Panchakaruki*-which included *Kulala* (potter) *Karmara* (blacksmith), *Vardhaki* (carpenter) *Napita* (barber) and *Rajaka* (*Dhobi*).

Important guild officials included *Bhandagarika*, the *Jethaka*, *Sethis*, *Mahasethis*, *Anusethis*, *Uttarasethi*, *Japada Sethi*, *Lekaka*, *Heranika* (treasurer) and *Ganjavara*, *Navakaramika* (overseer of works) etc.

Sresthin.

Sresthin—Seems to have been the most important officer of the guild. He has been described on a par with the minister by Visakhadatta. He was treated with courtesy by ministers. The office of the *Shresthin* was common with the Western Chalukya as can be seen from their inscriptions. The Sethis enyoed an important position in the 11th century A. D. in South India. The Sethis (of the 8th-9th century A. D.) gave place to the Swamis (Lords) of commercial centres like that of Aihole.

The guilds stamped their goods.

A guild was the outcome of men's instinct to form a unit for some common purpose. Guild was a famillar institution in India from time immemorial. From the study of the *Grhvasutras*, it is evident that the transition from individual enterprise to corporate activities on a large scale had begun, The heads of the guilds enjoyed highest social position in the Buddhist period. It had taken a firm hold on the economic life of the country. The inscriptions are full of references to guilds and the part played by them in the economic life of the country. There were both craft guilds and merchant guilds. The guilds leaders of Vaishali. Paharpur, Damodarpur etc. played a very prominent part in the city administration and acted as the pioneers of trade and industry in their respective areas The nature of relationship between the guilds and the State was that of reciprocity. According to Kautilya king should establish organic relationship with the guilds. Jolly believes that the chief motives of legal agreement between the guilds and the State was to bring corporations under strict control and protection of the State. According to Hopkins, guild was an important factor in the development of mercantile interests at a time when such a combination was indispensable.

Guilds played a very prominent part in the promotion of trade and industry in ancient India. The guilds preserved the self-government in trade Hemachandra mentions *Srenis* and *Prasrenis*. According to a Mysore Inscription the *prasrenis* may be regarded as local units of a *sreni.* covering a wide area. The laws relating to guilds and associated groups are found in the commentaries and digests. The various subdivisions of trading corporation coming from one thousand districts from the four quarters are referred to in an eleventh century inscription of south India. The *Lekhapadhati* reveals that there was a separate government department under the Chalukyas of Gujerat to look after the *Srenis* (*srenikarana*). The *Anvada inscription* of Gujerat informs us that merchants aud industrialists took part in the deliberations of the council of a port town (*IA*-XLI.20). All these evidences go to show the importance the guild had acquired in the economic life of the country.

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Chapter—11

Revenue System

I

Introductory

The evolution of government in ancient India presupposes the existence of some form of finance since it was impossible to ignore the importance of finance in administration. The king of the State had unlimited power over the wealth of his subjects as well as of enemies whom he conquered. A well filled treasury was the fundamental condition of the existence and strength of the government. The king had to maintain the equilibrium between the credit and the debit sides of the State finance. The sense of security was well recognised as fundamental to the growth of capital and consequent economic prosperity to the kingdom. A well defined system of finance would minimise the excesses of the wealth of the people without encroching upon its roots. The right to taxation is inherent in the government but according to the ancient Indian thinkers it is not an unconditional right. Here it was no protection, no tax. It was the duty of the king to protect the people from harsh and unjust administration who were like evil planets. In fact, taxation should never defeat its own purpose.

Treasury or *Kosha* was an important element of State and the ancient Indian economist attached much importance to the financial aspect of the State. Due attention was paid to the treasury which formed the backbone of all State undertakings. The revenue in the early Vedic period consisted mainly of the voluntary contribution of the rich, the compulsory tribute levied from the conquered tribes and the tributes paid by the weak kings. The mention of *Bali* and *Sulka* is an indication of the fact that the Vedic people were acquainted with some principles of taxation. Here we come across for the first time a conception of State's revenue from agricultural produce and contribution in cattle which were compulsory in character. With the elaboration of State power, taxes multiplied and the importance of finance was realised. The *Smrtis*, the Budhist literature, the Epics, the *Arthashastra*, contemporary literature, foreign accounts, inscriptions and Sukra give us an insight into the early working of the revenue system and public finance.

II

Principles of Taxation.

There are references in the *MBH* to show the diverse activities of the State in the realm of *Vartta* for the purpose of filling its treasury. Multiplicity of taxes is to be found in the *MBH*. Sovereign property consisted of crown lands, waste lands, forests, mines, natural tanks, reservoirs, which yielded considerable income to the kingdom. They also claimed mines and salt deposits. The Rigveda refers to the permanent sources of income but in course of time a multiple system of taxation was adopted. Apart from the direct revenues of the State, there were several derivative sources of revenue obtained from taxes, fees, fines, penalties and other miscellaneous sources. The concept of multiplicity of taxes is clear from Kautilya, Manu and the *MBH*. Taxes were regarded as wages of the king for the services of administration.

Both Kautilya and Manu suggest that the king should draw reasonable taxes and certain principles are to be kept in view while levying taxes. The king is likened to a gardener. He should not use improper means for collecting taxes. The ruler should act like a bee which collects honey without causing pain to the plant. He was to act like sun and Indra in the collection and distribution of resources. King was not to forget that nothing exposed him to greater hatred than oppressive taxation. Taxation should be of a type that is least felt by the people. No demand was to be made on those who had not enough for their own subsistence.

Taxes should be gradually imposed with mildness and at proper time. Taxes on merchandise should be fixed once and for all after proper consideration of all the pros and cons. It should not cripple the economic resources. Public expenditure should be kept at the minimum to enable the State to increase its revenue. The principle of economy implies minimum possible cost of collection. Manu and *MBH* are clear on this point. Taxes were imposed with due consideration. Kautilya illustrates the principle of elasticity by suggesting that the king should exploit resources without being harsh and unsympathetic to his subjects. Similar theory is propounded in the *Kural.*

Taxes should be rationalised and diversified according to convenience. The principle of equity was applied in times of calamity and also during the emergencies. The long list of taxable commodities shows a developed State of administrative organisation, though humane principles of taxation were kept in view for the maximum benefit of the people. Deficit was to be avoided as far possible.

Alberuni has stated that the Indians pay one-sixth of their income to the king in recognition of the protection he affords to his subjects, their property and their families. Taxes were paid in lieu of service to the people by the King. The Epics, Manu, Visnu, Kautilya and others confirm that the king's recompense for protection was to be one-sixth. The idea of protection as justification for taxation was well-conceived in ancient India. The Buddhists, the Epics and Kautilya refer to contractual relationship or social contract because here it is clear that rights and obligations are to be fulfilled by the ruler and the ruled. The *MBH* suggests that a man should abandon, like a leaky boat, a king who affords no protection. The king should cause annual revenue to be collected by responsible and trustworthy persons. The tax was a wage for the king. Taxes were collected for social security and protection of the people. The Vaisyas were encouraged to multiply money.

Apastamba enjoins on the king to collect only lawful taxes. Lawful taxes are those which are sanctioned by customs and approved by the *Smritis*. Unreasonable taxes are criticised. The people should be protected from official extortions. The rulers are advised to rule righteously and not to oppress the people. Though one-sixth was the usual share, other rates were also in vogue under different circumstances. Besides land, *Bhaga*, *Bali* and *Sulka* were the three just, legal and regular taxes paid by the agriculturists and commercial classes. Oppressive taxation were not unknown. The *Jatakas* have numerous references to this aspect. Epigraphic sources also imply that the State functionaries sometimes oppressed the rural people and imposed on them vexatious taxes.

III

Sources of Taxation.

The main resources of revenue included *Rastra* (country parts) *Durga* (cities on forts), *Khani* (mines), *Setu* (irrigational projects), *Vana* (forests), *Vraja* (heard. of cattle), merchandise, treasure troves and other voluntary contributions. We may divide the main sources of revenue under the following heads :—

(i) Income from private lands—We know that land formed the chief source of revenue in ancient India. *Shadabhag* or one-sixth denoted the regular share of king in kind. The *Smritis* and the *Epics* take *Bali* as king's share in grain instead of *Bhaga* and according to Kautilya and Kalidas even the ascetics had to pay that out of the collections made by them. Land revenue differed with different varieties of soil and crops. The *Rummindei Pillar Inscription* of Asoka shows that the usual rate of one-sixth was reduced to one-eighth in the village of Lumbini as a special case. Gautama refers to one-sixth, one-eighth and one-tenth on good, intermediate and bad qualities of soil. State share depended on the nature of the soil. Manu suggests one-sixth, one-eighth and one-twelfth. Kautilya recommends one-third and one-fourth in times of Emergency. On the whole it varied between one-fourth and one-twelfth. The rate varied according to the soil, productivity and irrigation. It is evident from the *Karle Buddhist Cave Inscription* of Vasisthaputra Pulumavi that there were other taxes besides *Bhaga*.

Bali, in the Vedic period, was realised from the vanquished foes and it was realised as a tribute even in 150 A. D. from other rulers by the Cheras. Gradually it came to be identified as a contribution on land rent paid by the cultivators. Though a voluntary tribute in the early period, its nature changed later and it continued to be a fiscal dues. Asoka remitted Bali altogether in Lumbini. *Bhaga, Bali* and *Kara* were income from *Rastra*. *Pradeshtarah* was officialy deputed to collect *Bali*—a tax forcibly collected by officials according to Bhattaswami and a means of subsistence of the king's officials according to Ksirawami. Johnston takes it as a land revenue at the legal rate of one-sixth. *Milindapanha* treats it as an emergency tax. Manu and Gautama use it in the generic sense of taxes while *Smritis* regard it as identical with *Bhaga* and at times it is synonymous with *Kara*, though *Bhaga*, *Bali* and *Kara* are three distinct terms. It is also treated as an oppressive tax. It was imposed along with *Visti*. Bhattaswami defines the rate of *Bali* as one-tenth or one-twentieth. *Bhaga*, *Bali*, and *Sulka* are mentioned in the *Junagadh Rock Inscription* of Rudradaman as regular tax and *Kara*, *Pranaya* and *Visti* as emergency tax.

Kara was a well-known revenue term and has been interpreted in the following manner—

(i) Taxes paid in money;
(ii) Taxes paid by vassal kings
(iii) Taxes upon fruits and trees;
(iv) Emergency tax;
(v) Tax in general
(vi) Annual tax.

We have seen above that *Bali*, *Kara* and *Sulka* are separately mentioned. Ksiraswami interprets it as a charge upon all movable and immovable articles. It was imposed on merchants—it was a receipt in commodities or kinds, or tax payable by the inhabitants in different months. It was a distinct source of revenue from the *Rastra*. It was realised both in kind or cash, being a levy on *Rastra*. It is also taken as emergency contribution. It was possibly a periodical cess levied over *Rastra*. We have reference to *Kara*, *Pindakara*, *Pratikara* etc. realised from the rural areas.

Visti—(Forced labour) appeares to be a source of income to the State and according to Kautilya some of the villages supplied *Visti*—a compulsory contribution of labour. According to Bhattaswami, such forced labour as demanded in lieu of the payment of taxes and a proper account of *Visti* was maintained by the State officials. It is mentioned with *Hiranya*, *Sulka*, and *kara*. M. H. Gopal treats it in the nature of an additional tax. It was, of course, an oppressive tax. It is distinguished from paid labour.

Pratibhaga was the offering of fruits and other such things to the king and sometimes the landgrants were exempted from such obligations. The daily presents were the perquisites of the headman. *Hiranya* was also a form of tax and was a levy on the peasants. It has also been interpreted as a tax in cash levied upon some special crops and at times as revenue both in grain and in specie. It was some sort of imposition on land in cash. *Pasu* was a cattle tax levied upon pastoral wealth of the people. *Pranaya* (benevolence, ranging from one-half to one-tenth) was imposed on different classes of animal in times of difficulty.

Rajju was a unit of measure for measuring lands and the *Rajjukas* were connected with cadastral survey in the rural area. Kautilya refers to *Rajju* as a source of income to the State revenue from the district officials—and it might have been a tax collected by the *Rajukas*. *Choraraju* was another source of income. They were the police officers responsible for the safety of the realm from the inroads of thieves etc. It might have been a sort of police tax in the village.

Vastu—is mentioned by Kautilya under the income coming from the cities or *Durga*. It was possibly a tax on private buildings or sites. Houses were numbered for tax paying purposes. Taxes were levied even on the sale of lands and buildings (*Vastu*). *Senabhakta* were royal dues payable at the time of the marching of the army. *Parsva* indicated taxes that are collected when there is some margin left for such collection, charge collected in excess of the proper tax. It was an extra charge upon land and Bhattaswami justifies the exaction of such tax. It is also believed to be a supertax collected on excess profit, as marginal revenue.

Income from Crown property.

Crownlands constituted the mainstay of finance. The husbandmen paid a land-tribute to the king, paid into the royal treasury a fourth part of the produce of the soil. The remark of the Greek authors has created a good deal of controversy. Dr. U. N. Ghoshal suggests that according to the version of Diodoros the tax paid by the cultivators to the royal treasury amounted to one-fourth of the produce in the absence of special arrangements. Here it should be noted that according to the Greek authors all India was the property of the Crown. Arrian (second century A. D.) mentions taxes from herdsmen, pastures and tributes from workers which Diodoros and Strabo do not refer. Even Kautilya refers to one third or one-fourth according to the taxable capacity of the people in difficult times. Diodoros refers mainly to the crown lands.

According to A. N. Bose, there are two taxes, one, the regular *Bhaga* and another the irregular *Bali*. After a close examination of the contradictory passages in Diodoros and Strabo, it is evident that the tenants employed on the royal farms had to pay some rent of the land as well as one-fourth of the gross produce to the State treasury. Kautilya says that the tenants working with their own seeds and bullocks were to receive one-half share of the harvest from the State. The *Smritis* also recommend the same rate. The multifarious taxes, noted above, realised from the private landowners were not levied on the royal tenants. Kautilya refers to a type of tenants who could supply on their labour and were to receive one-fourth or one-fifth of the produce of the royal farms. Crown lands were given only to those who could cultivate them.

Among the other sources of income to the State, Kautilya refers to *Parihinika*, a sort of compensation levied in the shape of grains for any damage. *Setu* is a fiscal word in Kautilya—a technical term referring to income accruing from flower gardens, fruit gardens, vegetable gardens, wet fields etc. Mention is also made of royal merchandise derived from *Setu*. The State regulated water for fiscal purposes. Kautilya's *Udakabhaga* refers to the water cess from royal irrigation works and Kautilya introduces different rates varying between one-third and one-fifth. *Kaushthevaka* indicated taxes on lands below tanks and lakes built by the King. Some scholars do not agree with this view and suggest that it indicated income from different sources. Forests (*Vana*) were sources of substantial income to the State, specially *Hastivana* (elephants forests) and *Dravyavana* (timber forests etc). Mines were a state monopoly and source of treasury Strabo refers to a mountain of mineral salt. There were also gold and silver mines and mineral wealths in dffe-rent parts of the country are mentioned in almost all the native and foreign sources.

Income from mines was also obtained from various heads and Kautilya refers to ten such heads. Mines difficult to exploit were let out to private persons on *prakrava* (rent) or *bhaga* (share in output). The king should take half of the metal found underground. Salt was also an important source of income. Private persons could manufacture salt under state license. Duties were also levied on imported salt. According to Pliny greater revenue accrued to the King from the rock salt than that derived from gold and pearls. The *Satavahanas*, the *Pallavas* and the *Brhatapalayanas* relinquished salt rights in favour of the donees. Honest officers were appointed to look after all types of mines.

Income from Trade and Commerce.

The word '*Sulka*' has been defined as a tax on trade. Apastamba and others have taken it in a general sense of tax and duties on merchandise and Manu takes it in the sense of dues paid by merchant. It has also been rendered as tolls. Kautilya keeps it as one of the items of revenue under *Durga* and at another place it is distinguished from the other trade incomes like *Vartani, Taradeva, Gulmadeva, Ativahikani* etc. *Avadanasataka* and *Divyavadana* mention *Sulka* along with *gulma* and *Taradeva*. According to Kautilya, it meant duty or tax levied on articles, on internal, external and foreign goods (entering or growing out of city) and is analogous to modern *Octroi* duty. It was also realised from the merchants at the port town. It is also mentioned in the *Junagadh Rock Inscription of* Rudradaman. According to Apastamba and Gautma, King should levy one-twentieth (as a duty) of the merchandise. According to Baudhayana, ten *panas* and one choice article should be taken (*samurdrasulka*). Kautilya's rate varies frome one-sixth to one-twentyfifth on different types of articles. We learn from the Tamil literature that the State maintained a regular custom's department. Sulka was also levied on the sale of plots of land, garden, buildings etc. Rules and Regulations were framed to govern the matters relating to the payment of *Sulka*.

Apart from *Sulka*, there were other taxes viz. *Dvaradeya* (gate dues at the rates of one-fifth of the amount of *Sulka*) levied upon different goods entering the city; *Vartani* (road toll or transit duties collected at the frontiers on all foreign goods) is also mentioned by Yajnavalkya; revenue terms like *Yatravetana, Tara, Taradeya* and *Tarpanya* are mentioned in a number of contemporary sources. *Tarpanya* is ferry tax. The income accruing from ferries was remitted to the State treasury. *Ativahikam* is carriage cess realised at the sea and river boundaries and it appears to have been an additional duty.

Gulmadeya, according to Kautilya, was to be paid by the merchants dealing in foreign merchandise. It was a fiscal dues together with *Sulka* and *Tarpanya. Gulma* is also used in the sense of a picket of guard or troop of soldiers and posted in forts, frontier towns, parks etc. It was a sort o. military outpost with a strength of nine elephants, 9 chariots, twentyseven horses and forty five soldiers. *Gulmadeya* might have been a cess paid by the merchants and traders at the military stations in the cities or countrysides—a charge for providing protection to traders. It is also taken as a tax paid at the military headquarters. Manu and the *MBH* take it in the military sense. *Gulmas* were placed on all sides of the realm and *Gaulmika* was an officers in charge of military outposts whose duty was to collet gulma *(duty)* form merchants engaged in foreign trade. The Brahmanas were exempt from such levy. Patanjali mentions *Gaulmika* and it is also mentioned in a number of inscriptions. *Pratívedhinikam* was a punching or stamping tax. Liquor was also an important source of income.

Miscellaneous Incomes.

Visti—was a sort of forced labour (*Corvee*). The guilds and handicraftsmen (*Karusilpiganah*) paid fees to the State for their registration and recognition. *Kupya* and *Vilopa* defy all interpretation. *Utsanga* denotes a tax collected on the occasion of the birth of a prince; is also taken in the sense of presentation to the king for which Kautilya also uses *Aupavanika. Utsanga* is interpreted as an excess tax over and above the fixed amount, or extra cess derived from the villages on some festive occasions. *Utsang* and *Aupanayika* were different sources of revenue. Presents and royalties were also important sources of revenue. Gambling was also an important source of revenue. The term *Upasthana* denotes receipts accruing from the underhand methods. *Vyaji* was levied upon liquids like oils, butter etc. *Klipta* occurs in the *Arthashastra.* Villages on the sea shores or river banks had to pay *Klipta.* It is taken as a fixed tax. The nature of this tax is not very clear.

There were also incomes from the State controlled establishments. The prostitutes (*Ganika*) had to pay tax on two days' earnings in a month. Buffoons, actors, singers, dancers etc. also had to pay taxes to the State treasury. There was also a passport fee. State income was derived from the *Vraja* (herds). Fines and penalties formed important sources of income. Kautilya mentions three hundred and forty kinds of fines. The heirless property was usually inherited by the State. Other sources of income included *Anyajata* (income from some other source), *Aputrakam* (persons having no sons), the ownerless, lost or forgotten property and *Nidhi* (treasure trove) which generally belonged to the state.

Emergency Taxation.

Additional levies were recommended to meet emergencies. The word *Atiyavika* in the *Mahasthan and Sahagaura Inscription* point to the state emergency or urgency in specified areas as a result of which some extra levy of crops and other provisions appears to have been realised and stored in royal granaries to ameliorate the sufferings of the poor and afflicted. Emergency normally led to financial stringency. *Pranaya* is taken in the sense of emergency levy. It denoted offerings or contributions nominally voluntary but which people feel constrained to make to please somebody. The *Milindapanha* refers to a tax to be paid to the state in case of any emergency. Apart from emergency taxation, the revenue was also realised by the state under false pretences, cheating people through spies, appropriating property with the help of prostitutes, confiscating the property of the heretics, temples, dead men, of religious institutions and the property of the opponents. *Pranaya* was another handle of oppression and avidity. Whatever be its nature, emergency revenue was generally collected according to the ability of the people and the benevolent kings did not burden his subjects even at the time of great crisis.

Review of the sources of income Bhattaswami explain *pindakara* under *rastra* as comprising taxes levied upon the whole village. This tax is not mentioned in the post Mauryan and Gupta period. In the post Mauryan and Gupta periods, villages were not assessed collectively but with reference to individual holdings. In the Mauryan period uplands and lowlands were separately recorded by the *Gopa.* Manu ordains that a king can take one sixth, one eighth and one twelfth of the crops. The option laid down is based no the varying fertility of the soil. Brhaspati prescribes one tenth, one eighth and one sixth on *Khila* land (cultivable waste which entitled more than usual cost). Visnu, Narada and *Santiparva* (*MBH*) also prescribed one sixth and the king is often known as *Shadabhagika.* In the Gupta period one sixth seems to have been the usual practice as is evident from the *Dharmashadabhaga* in several Gupta epigraphs. The customary royal share was also known as '*Bhaga*' and it is mentioned as an independent term along with *Bali, kara* etc. It appears that *Bhaga* was king's usual one sixth of the produce. It was the main item of land revenue through the ages.

Ball was also of the nature of a tax and was king's due both from his subjects and vanguished chiefs. In the age of the Brahmanas, it was a compulsory contribution payable by the subjects. In the *Jatakas* it meant an additional and oppressive cess. *Milinda. panha* describes it as an emergency tax. It underwent change in the following centuries and is mentioned with *caru, sattra, vaisvadeva* and *agnihotra* and as such it can not mean any tax. It does not figure in the list of taxes from which the beneficiaries were exempted. Manu, Aswaghosh, Visnu, Brhaspati, *MBH* and *Mahavamsa* mention it as a tax and the *Amarakosa* uses it as a synonym of *Sulka* and *kara.* It is difficult to say whether it is identical with *Bhaga* or not.

Kara, according to *Medhatithi,* meant gift of commodities; according to Sarvanaryan, a fixed gold payment on land according to Ramchandra, as contribution in the form of grass, wood etc; whereas Raghavanand meant by it a monthly payment by the villagers. Bhattaswami treats it as an annual tax paid during the month of *Bhadrapada, Vasanta* and the like whereas Ksirswami treats it as a charge upon all movable and immovable articles. It was a periodical tax levied from the villages over and above king's normal grain share. In the *Junagadh Inscription it is* treated as oppressive impost different from the general land tax Aswaghosh takes it in the sence of a tax and it is described as such in the Allahabad *prasasti* of Samudragupta. Though it was a kind of land revenue, its exact nature is yet to be ascertained.

Hiranya (though a branch of king's revenue) is not included in the regular list of constituents of the body of income (*ayamukha* or *ayasariram*) by Kautilya. Indirectly it means that it was an irregular levy. In the post-Mauryan period it was an item of king's regular revenue. Visnu and Manu prescribe it at one-fiftieth. In the Gupta grants, donees are exempted from *Hiranyas*. *Hiranya* might have been levied upon commercial crops.

Udakabhaga was irrigation tax. Water tax was levied from the cultivators of the non-crown lands. *Uparikara* was a tax levied from the cultivators who had no proprietory rights in the soil and it was recoded with *Udranga*—the two taxes together meant taxes on temporary and permanent tenants respectively. *Uparikara* is extra cess and *Udranga* is a tax on permanent tenants. *Halikakara* (a tax on ploughs), *Ditya* (denoted all taxes, except visti and that which is to be given), *Tulyameya* (?), *Dhanya*—the exact meaning of all these is not yet very clear. *Pindakara* and *Udakabhaga* do not appear in the post-Mauryan records whereas *Uparikara*, *Udranga* and *Halikakara* appear for the first time in the Gupta records.

IV

Exemption from Taxation

The *Srotriyas* (the learned Brahmanas) were freed from paying taxes and so also the philosophers and the sophists. Such remission was not permitted to all of them. There is a clear prescription that lands and other gifts should not be bestowed on unlearned Brahmanas. Those who fail to perform their regular duties are to be levied taxes and according to the *MBH*, the erring Brahmanas are to be chastised and even *Bali* and *visti* should be

Bali and *visti* should be imposed on them. Brahmanas and ascetics violating laws are to be fined and those addicted to gambling had also to pay a fine.

The royal grants carried exemptions from taxation. The armour and the implement makers, ship-builders, artisan etc. were not only free from payment of taxes but also received maintenance from the royal exchequer. Revenues were renewed in favour of the donees. Sometimes taxes were also remitted by kings like Asoka and Kharavela. The king had prerogative to grant immunity to any individual. Remission of taxes as a relief to cultivators is inculcated in the *Arthashastra* and the *MBH*.

Women, students living with teachers, Sudras, blind, deaf, dumb and diseased persons were also exempted. *Sulka* was not to be levied on articles intended for marriage, those taken by a bride from parent's house, those for presentation to the king, those for sacrificial or ceremonial purposes for confinement of women, for investiture of sacred thread etc; was not to be collected upon articles worth less than one *Karshapana*, earnings of craftsmanship, income from alms, on infants, messengers etc, The state also created a large number of exemptees from the ferry tax. Fishermen, carrier of firewood, flowers, herdsmen, royal messenger, persons transporting seed, ascetics, children, aged, diseased, pregnant women and those on a journey to pilgrimage were exempted from ferry tax. Some rulers allowed general exemption from ferry tax as is evident from *Usavadata's Nasik Inscription*. Merchants and mariners dealing in foreign goods were favoured with remission and such concession comprised exemptions from payment of *Vyaji* (premia on sale). Such merchants were also immune from payment of trade tax viz. *Sulka*, *Tarpanya* and *Gulma*. Further concessions were also granted if necessary.

V

Items of Public Expenditure

Certain principles guided the course of public expenditure in ancient India. The welfare of the people was the prime consideration of the state and a huge amount was spent on the welfare activities in ancient India. According to Manu, the King should shower benefit on his people. Usinara say—"my wealth exists for my subjects". The community at large should be benefitted out of public expenditure. Asokan inscriptions and Greek authors testify to the welfare activities of the Mauryan State. According to Gautama, the king was to live on surplus. Asoka insisted an *Alpavyayata sadhu* (R. E. *III*), that is, he recommended the merit of minimum and moderate expenditure.

Kautilya suggests that the king should secure the performance of services by different officials out of one-fourth of the total revenue. The rulers are advised to keep down the expenses of the state. Public expenditure should be justified in terms of the welfare of society as well as in terms of financial means at the disposal of the State. Since revenues were collected from all possible sources, the State naturally spent a considerable amount on welfare activities. Kalidasa's dictum in this respect is worth noting—"just as the sun takes moisture from the earth to give it back a thousand fold, so the king gathers taxes from the people only to provide for their welfare". According to Manu, King like India showes benefit on his people. Economy in expenditure is recommended. Rules were framed to scrutinise public expenditure.

Kautilya gives a systematic items of public expenditure. It includes expenditure on—

(i) Chanting of auspicious hymns during the worship of gods and ancestors and on the occasion of giving gifts;

(ii) harem

(iii) kitchen

(iv) messengers

(v) Storehouses

(vi) armoury

(vii) warehouse

(viii) store of raw materials

(ix) manufactures

(x) maintenance of army

(xi) herds of cows, and museum of beasts;

(xii) storage of firewoods and fodders etc.

The expenditure also included general administration, state assistance to the poor and various other welfare activities. The state incurred a huge expenditure on State activities, on employees, on hunters, ship-builders, armour makers, and on extensive tours of officials (as in the case of Asoka). Kautilya's scheme of payment to the staff varied between 60 *Panas* and 48000 *Paoas.* Patanjali refers to *Bhrtakamasa* or monthly wages. The *MBH* also refers to the monthly disbursement of salary. Army consumed a major portion of expenditure.

– commanders 48000 *Panas*
—captains. 12000 *Panas*
—chiefs of military corporations (*Chaturanga*)-8000 *Panas*
—Physicians of the army-2000 *Panas*
—Trained soldier—500 *Panas*

Army personnel were given advance at the time of expedition. Persons, dying on duty, were compensasgted by the State.

There was also scheme for poor relief. None in the kingdom should suffer hunger, sickness or heat hrough want or intentionally so says Apastamba. According to Gautama, king should provide relief to those incapable of earning their livelihood, The *Dharmamahamatras* extended help to the destitutes and those infirm by age (*PE*—VII; *RE*—V, VIII). Asoka enunciates a great consideration for the poor and the wretched. Kautilya and Manu have also enunciated such measures.

The *Mathura Stone Inscription* of Huviska (106 A. D.) records that the State maintained the hungry, thirsty, and the destitute. Gau amiputra Satkarni sympathised with the woes of the people. The *Nagarjunikondai Inscription* (second-third century A, D.) records the bestowal of ceaseless gifts on the miserable, poor and the destitute. Public expenditure also included a wide range of humanitaria activities, Relief measures were taken during famines and other calamities. Alms and feeding houses were erected at important centres.

Medical facilities were provided by the State. Asoka made medical arrangements for both men and animals and we have references to veterinary surgeons in Kautilya. Construction and maintenance of roads was one of the primary duties of the State. The

State also laid out parks, gardens; wells, planted trees, constructed rest houses and undertook to safeguard other public utility services. Irrigation was also a major State responsibility. The *Hathigumpha Inscription* of Kharavela and the *Junagadh Rock Inscriptions* of Rudradaman and Skandagupta throw light on the subject.

Giftss and charities also formed part of public expenditure—a practice prevalent as late as the days of Harsha and confirmed by the testimony of Hiuentsang, Temples, monasteries, caves, and stupas were also constructed by the State and money endowments to those institutions are not unknown. State festivities involved a considerable expenditure and kings used to be very liberal on festival days. The rulers also spent a huge amount on the maintenance of royal dignity. On the whole social benefit was major consideration of early Indian economy.

VI

Taxes in the Medieval Period

The classification of the items of revenue in the early medieval period may be categorised in the following manner :—

(i) Land revenue (one-sixth to one-twelfth)- it showed a great variation under the *Samantas*.

(ii) Property tax on gold capital (*hiranya*), on cattle (*pasw*) and the imposts on plough, *araghatta*, oil mills etc.

(iii) Professional tax;

(iv) custom duties on imports and exports, tolls, cesses and excise duty, etc;

(v) administrative revenue imposed for the breach of regulastion (*sadasaparadha*);

(vi) revenue receipts from the monopoly of gardens, forest, mines, fisheries, etc;

(vii) receipts from quasi-manorial lands;

(viii) revenue from the places of public amusements, recreation halls and gambling centres;

(ix) Miscellaneous collections—ferry dues, port dues, duties levied on pilgrime, etc;

(*x*) dues realised for meeting the cost of local administration;

(xi) Irregular dues—*turuskandanda* was an extraordinary receipt,

(xii) tributes realised from the *Samantas*.

Taxes in the Pratihara Kingdom :—

(i) *Mavuta* (?) - possibly a contribution of the type of *bhoga* -

(ii) *Khalabhiksa* - demand for a portion of crop at the threshing floor.

(iii) *prasthaka*—a contribution at the rate of a *prastha* from every household;

(iv) *marganaka* (?)

(v) *skandhaka*—liabiliy of laboures to carry the luggage of touring officers upon their shoulders.

(vi) *aputrikadhana* (?)

(vii) *Nastibharat* (a type of death duty)

(viii) *chollak*, (a measure of load)

(ix) *utpadyamanavisti* (EI-IX No. IB) -

forced labour; or arising therefrom or the right to impose forced labour as occasion might arise—

Also *Utpadymanvistipratyaya*—tax payable in lieu of free labour.

Taxes in Bengal records :—

(i) *Chaurodharnika*—right of extirpation of robbers, police protection and things recovered from thieves.

(ii) *sulka* (customs and tolls)-

(iii) *Tara* (Ferry dues)

(iv) *harajas* (income derived from betel leaf plantations)

(v) *Kara* (general property tax levied periodically)

(vi) *Uparikara*

(vii) *tarik* (ferry dues)

Taxes in Paramara recorns :—

(i) *Sakamusti* (handful of vegetables)

(ii) *tailapalaka* (small measure of oil)

(iii) *kumbhapuraka* (vessels full of grain)

(iv) *akasotpatti* and *patala* (may be equated with *bhutavata* of older inscriptions - one that is incidentally acquirrd)

(v) *kalyanadhana*—collected on auspicious occasion.

Taxes in Chalukya records :—

(i) *nidhanas* (?)

(ii) *danibhaga* (land revenue, or periodical supplies of fruits, firewood etc).

(iii) *marganaka* (benevolence of general character imposed upon the villages—the original imposition of this kind had become permanent).

Taxes in the Gahadawal records :—

(i) *Pravanikara* (tax on retail dealers)

(ii) *kumaragadiank* (offerings to royal personages on ceremonious occasion).

(iii) *Kutuka* (tax on plough)

(iv) *Gokara, Jalakara, lavanakara* (Tax on cattle water and salt).

(v) *yamalikambli* (?)

(vi) *Dasabandhavisatiathuprastha, aksapatalaprastha. Pratiharaprastha*—(taxes payable by the villagers to the officers coneerned).

(viii) *Salohalavan akarah, samatsyakarah* (Taxes on iron, salt mines and fisheries-EI-IV, p. 101).

(viii) *Valadi* (Tax on bullocks).

(ix) *turuskadanda* (abolished in the reign of Jayachandra);

(x) *Niyataniyatadaya* (other specified and non-specified items of revenue receipt)

The list cannot be said to be exhaustive.

Taxes in the Kalachuri records (EI-XXI N. 15)

(i) *Pravanivada*
(ii) *Rasavati*
(iii) *Cari*
(iv) *Kamta*
(v) *Visenimadava*
(vi) *Pattakiladaya*

MAY INDICATE DUES FOR OCCUPYING CAMPING GROUNDS, GRAZING CATTLE, EXTRACTING TODDY, AND CROSSING RIVERS respectively. (*Visayikadaya*) may be interpreted as districts dues No. VI may have been a local tax payable by the villagers to headman.

(vii) *duhyasadthvadaya* (a tex for mending the incorrigible)

Taxes from Chandella records :—

(i) *Pasu* (a tax on cattle)
(ii) *sulka* (Octroi duty)
(iii) *uchit-anuchita* demands

Taxes from Oriya records (Somavamsi Karna)

(i) *Hastidana* (Tax on the maintenance of elephants)
(ii) *Varavalibardha* (Tax on the maintenance of superior bullocks)
(iii) *chittolla* (?)
(iv) *artharuva*
(v) *Pratyastharuva*
(vi) *adatta*
(vii) *padatijivya* (tax for the subsistence of infantry)
(viii) *antaravaddi*
(ix) *rintakavaddi*
(x) *vasavaki*
(xi) *visavali*
(xii) *ahidanda*
(xiii) *haladanda*
(xiv) *bandhadanda*
(xv) *vandapana*

Most of the terms here defy explanation or meaning.

(xvi) *Vijayavandapana*

Taxes in the Chauhan records :—

(i) *Talarabhavya* (the share of revenue payable to the *Talara*)

(ii) *Selahattabhavya* (the share of revenue payable to *selahatta*, sailyahastha, from the custom house)

(iii) *baladipabhavya* (the share of revenue payment to *baladhipa*).

(iv) *dana* or *adanas* (customs)

(v) *laga* (imposts)

(vi) *atmapaila* (*paila* due to the *bhokta* or the holder of the landad estate).

(vii) *halasadi* (a tax per plough)

(viii) *dasabandha* (a tax of one-tenth or the professional tax).

(ix) *Nidhana* (Treasure-trove)

(x) *abhyantarasiddhi* (right to mineral wealth)

(xi) *rajakiyabhoga, udranga, uparikara, danda,*

(xii) *Ghanaka* (dues from oil mills),

Revenue terms in the Lekhapaddhati :—

(i) *agamanigamadana* (tax for import & expcrt)
(ii) *pathiyaka* (road tax)
(iii) *rajabhoga* (royal revanue)
(iv) *medhiharaka* (a special tax on thereshing floor)
(v) *rajakiya* (royal tax)
(vi) *khalakiya* (threshing floor tax)
(vii) *halamprati* (plough tax)
(viii) *gamota* (tax payable to village priest)
(ix) *dani* (land tax)
(x) *gochara* (pasture tax)
(xi) *sagunanidana* (road cess)
(xii) *dana* (road cess)
(xiii) *karpatapada* (offerings)
(xiv) *dasabandha* (one tenth)
(xv) *Vyavaharapada* (tax on merchants)
(xvi) *Vehotaka* (plough tax)
(xvii) *mandavi* (a tax levied on articles to be sold in a market place)
(xviii) *bhoga* (a tax for the right of enjoyment)
(xix) *mangaliyaka* (a tax collected on auspicious occasion)
(xx) *talarabhavya* (?)
(xxi) *Volapana* (tax collected for safe-guarding the goods of merchants).

According to Alberuni prostitutes constituted a rich source of royal revenue. *Dasabandha* was also levied on the temple prostitutes or *Devadasis*. Tax on prostitutes was contemplated as early as and duties on places of pilgrimage and worship. Gambling was also a source of revenue.

VII

Revenue Administration

Kautilya advocated a system of financial administration through a judicious policy of placing a premium on efficiency, honesty and punctuality. It was in the age of the Mauryas that a new era ushered in the revenue administration of the country. Kautilya has given a very detailed and minute rules about keeping, preparation, submission and scrutiny of accounts. Receipts have been classified into—

(a) current
(b) last balance
(c) accidental

A wise collector-general was to conduct the work of revenue collection by increasing the income and decreasing the expenditure. The revenue had a large number of superintendents. The Greek writers mention the following officers connected with the revenue administration :—

(i) The councillors, Assessors, Deliberators, or Advisors (*Sachivas or Amatyas*)

(ii) The Treasurers of the State and Superintendents of Treasury (*Sannidhata*)

(iii) *Agronomoi* (District officials)
(iv) *Astvonomoi* (city or town officials)
(v) Admiral of Fleet

(vi) The Inspector and Overseers

Sannidhata :—The Councillors and Assessors had extensive power of all high officers of the state including governors. The Treasures of the state and Superintendents of Treasury included an officer known as *Sannidhata* (chief of the Imperial treasury) of Kautilya. He was assisted by a competent staff and he had a thorough knowledge of both internal and external receipts. His office is also known from the post-Mauryan inscriptions with designations as *Ganjavara, Kosthagarika, Bhandagarika*, etc. and the latter was worthy of great respect by the guilds. The *Agronomoi* end *Astyonomoi* and others incharge of military affairs were under the general designation of magistrates and they may correspond to some of the *adhayaksas* or superintendents of Kautilya. Such departmental heads were assisted by Accountants (*Saukhyayaka*), scribes (*lekhaka*), coin examiners (*rupadarsaka*) and treasurers (*nivigrahakas*). *Agronomoi* kept rivers improved, land measured and inspected canals. collect taxes and superintended the crafts connected with the land. Their functions had close relations with R*ajjukas*—possibly a district officials whose functions correspond with those of Strabo's magistrates. Agronomoi's power of rewarding or punishing brings them closer to *Rajjukas* who had both revenue and judicial functions. A third century inscription of Chutu Satkarni II connects them with assessment, land dispute and collection etc.

Astyonomoi :—*Astyonomoi* had the control of the city and the city admistration was divided into six committees of five each. Kautilya had *Nagaradhyaksa* and Asokan inscriptions have *Nagalaka* or *Nagala-Viyohalaka* correspoding to *Nagaraka.* According to Kautilya *Nagaraka* was responsible for the collection in the capital city and he was assisted by the *Gopas* and the *Sthanikas*. Magistrates having control of military affairs corresponded to *Navadhyaksa* of Kautilya. Overseers and Inspector corresponded to *Pattvedakas* of Asokan inscriptions, *Gudhapurasas* and *Charas* of Kautilya. They were associated with the revenue inteligence. The inteligence officers were also informed of the land grants in the village. Revenue inteligence was one of the novel innovations of the early Indians.

Asoka introduced the system of organised revenue administration and appointed *Antamahamatras, Pradesikas* and *Yutas* who were connected with the revenue and fiscal administration.

(i) *Antamahamatras* were officers of the frontiers or the *Antapalas* of Kautilya.

(ii) *Pradesikas* collected *B*ali from the rural people and inspected the work of *Gopas* and *Sthanikas* and exercised check on *Adhyaksas*. They went on tour after every five years.

(iii) The *Yutas* were *Yuktas* of Kautilya—He was employed among the cultivators and collected *Bali*.

All these officers were connected with the State funds and king's property and were also custodians of lost property. They have also been described as district treasury officers who managed king's property, received and kept accounts of revenues and had power to spend where expense was likely to lead to an increase of revenue.

Kautilya gives the list of following officers connected with the revenue administration;

(i) The *Gopas*—He was above the village headman and acted as village accountant with authority over five to ten villages, His duties were—

(a) to register all kinds of gifts, charities, sales, remission.

(b) to set up boundary marks.

(c) to maintain detailed account of income and expenditure of all households under his jurisdiction.

(d) to prepare census list of dwelling houses; and

(e) to specify therein whether houses are taxable or tax-free, and to state the taxes charged upon them severally under the heads of each payment, unpaid labour. toils. fines etc. [*AS* II. 35].

(ii) The *Sthanika* :—He was a district officer and attended to the accounts of eight hundred villages.

(iii) *Adhyaksas* :—The *Sulkadhyaksa* was the superintendent of tolls. He collected toll on imported and exported goods at *Sulkasala* The *Kosthagaradhyaksa* was the superintendent of store house. His duties included sale, purchase barter of different kinds of grain and he also supervised taxes coming from the country parts in kind or in cash. *Aksapataladhyaksa* was the Accountant General having charge of both currency and accounts. He maintained a detailed account of revenue produced by different department in the State.

Samaharta :—The *Arthashastra* (II. 15) further provides for the deputation of Inspector by the *Samaharta* in selected villages where he is to check up and report on the various heads of revenues assessed on the dwelling houses and the remissions granted to them. The *Semaharta* or the collector-general was the chief of the finance department. He was responsible for.

(i) collection of revenue from different sources—

(ii) supervision of the complete accounts of income, expenditure. and the royal harem.

(iii) to find out the ways and means of receiving and augmenting the income of the State—

In the post-Mauryan period we come across the following revenue officials—

(i) *The Gaulmika*—incharge of *Gulma,* an out post of soldiers and collected custom dues.

(ii) *Vimsatisa*—(Lord of twenty villages)

(iii) *Satesa or Satadhyaksa* (Lord of hundred villages)

These two supervised the revenue the expenditure under their jurisdiction. Other persons connected with the revenue administration were—

(i) *Rajakammika*

(ii) *Balisadhakas*

(iii) *Akasiyas*

(iv) *Tundiyas*

(v) *Agghakarako* etc.

It was the policy of the State to see that various sources of revenues are skillfully managed and supervised by contended and trustworthy men of unimpeachable integrity who knew the means of multiplying revenue, Punishments were prescribed for district official of the department. The State official in spite of all precautions, indulged in nefarious activities and misappropriated State funds. The revenue department was organised on sound lines. Annual accounts were submitted at the close of the month of

Asadha. Each and every item of revenue and expenditure were thoroughly examined.

In the early medieval period village headman appears to have been incharge of the collection of land revenue. Vacaspati Misra C. 9th Century A. D.) states that village headman collected the revenue from the different heads of families and delivered the same to the head of the *Visaya*, the latter gave it to *Sarvadhyaksa* who delivered same to the king. Some village headmen withheld the revenue and behaved like petty chieftains during the rule of the weak kings. Hemachandra observes that a share of the revenue was taken by the *Gramapati*. According to the *Lekhapaddhati*, the *Panchakula* granted *gramapattaka* to private individuals who offered to pay a fixed amount of land revenue in cash for the entire village. The *Sulka* was collected by the *Sulkamandapikas*. In Kashmir, the duty was collected at police station (*Dranga*). There were separate officers appointed for the collection of taxes.

The Accounts Department was a vital part of the financial administration. In so far as the collection of revenue is concerned, the *Dharmashastra* rule (one sixth to one-twelfth) was not followed in actual practice. The *manasara* gives a list of increasing rate of revenues realised by the various categories of rulers and vassal chiefs. According to Sukra, two departments were set apart for the work of revenue administration—

(i) *Sumantraka*—who knows of income and disbursement;

(ii) *Amatya*—having knowledge of lands and records. States are graded according to finance by Sukra as follows :

(1) *Samanta*	1,00000	300000	*Karshas*
(2) *Mandalika*	3,00000	1000000	,,
(3) *Rajan*	10 lacs	20 lacs	,,
(4) *Maharaj*	20 lacs	50 lacs	,,
(5) *Svaraj*	50 lacs	1 crore	,,
(6) *Viraj*	1 crore	50 crores	,,
(7) *Sarbabhuma*	50 crores	and above	,,

Some petty rulers realised two third of the produce. The lower the status of the chief the greater amount of tribute he was required to pay to his immediate overlord. Even the unrecognised chieftains collected tax from the villagers because of political condition with the result that the burden of taxation become heavy. In south India under the Cholas we come across some features of taxation system characterised by a rigorous mode of collection. The military subjected some peoples to torture of sitting in waters and standing in the sun for non-payment of taxes. Arbitrary imposts were exacted by several persons. The peasants had to bear the incidence of taxation to a large extent.

CHAPTER—12

Currency, Banking and Money-Lending

Currency

The basis of subsistence in the earliest period was hunting and food gathering. Later on, animals were domesticated for food and other purposes. In course of time the primitive society developed economic relationship and means of exchange in their economic undertaking came to be realised and this was confined to barter. Apart from barter, certain commodities of general value were used as standard media of exchange, for example, cow and food-grains, horses, hides of animals etc. It varied according to the class of society. Cow was the appropriate measure of value among the *Abhiras*. In the *Aiteraya Brahmana*, one year old cow was accepted as a standard price for the purchase of a certain quantity of *Soma*. The want of coincidence was a great handicap in the fulfilment of social needs.

To overcome these difficulties the need of money was felt and to have a portable and convenient standard different metals were introduced and the lump of gold, silver, copper, either in bar or in dust were used as media of exchange in the beginning. Gradually different stamps or marks were impressed on them by the issuing authorities.

The Indus Valley developed a highly civilised urban life having organised trade with the West and that stands further confirmed by the excavation of Lothal and other sites. Trade in the beginning assumed the form of direct exchange and need of money came from the fact of trade, The pre-Aryan people must have used certain media of exchange in their foreign trade and in other economic transactions. There must have emerged some form of monetary system. The various seals of different specifications must have been used as a media of exchange or in connection with some other economic transactions. Anyway, this is just a conjecture as we are not in a position to state definitely the real medium of exchange in the Indus Valley people. The fact remains that such a great civilisation could not develop without some sort of money economy.

The Aryans had a mixed pastoral and agricultural economy in which cattle played a predominant part. The Aryans prayed for the increase of cattle, the warrior accepted cattle as a booty and the priest was rewarded with cattle. Cattle assumed the nature of currency and values were reckoned sometimes in terms of cattle and wealth was reckoned in terms of a number of cattle a man possessed. Barter in the Vedic period was the usual method of trade but the coins in the crudest and primitive form had come to be known and partially used.

Niska (or gold necklace) is the earliest reference about the coins. It originally denoted a gold ornament worn on the neck (*Niskagriva*.) Its monetary use is referred to in the *Rigveda* when a singer celebrates the receipt of a hundred *niskas* and a hundred steeds. There is a reference to forty thousand coins on one occasion and eight thousand coins on another (*RV*—VIII. 2. 41). *Niska* is frequently used in terms of money and gold necklace and it is known as '*Nikhha*' in the *Jatakas*. *Niska* referred to a coined money and it was a gold coin. The value of a *niska* appears to have been considerable for in one place it is said that the Brahmanas were given a *niska* each. Other gold coins included *Satmana*, *pada Krsnala*, *Raktika*, *Gunya*, ete.

Mana is also recorded in the Vedic literature as desirable objects. Silver coins and silver *niskas* are also mentioned. The silver coin was known as *Ravis* in the Vedic age (*RV*—V. 33,6). The iump of gold *Hiranyapinda* also served the same purpose (*RV*—VI. 7. 22-23). The terms *Kosha* and *Hiranyapinda* are quite significant. Gold and silver of different weights and standard were used by the people as media of exchange. The Vedic people developed a fairly advanced standard of socio-economic life with abundance of gold, silver and copper and had developed monetary transaction in one form or the other. Different metallic coins served the needs of the Aryans and the people of India coined money long before the days of Alexander.

The weight of *niska* is recorded in the *Smritis*. Visnu, Yajnavalkya and Manu fixed *niska* as equal to four *Suvarna* and the *suvarna* was equal to three hundred and twenty *Krsnalas* (80×4). Besides *niska* and *mana*, other metallic coins included *Krsnala* and *Satmana* of gold and silver. *Krsnala* is also known as *Hiranya-krsnala*. *Krsnala* is also given as a gift to the participants of a race. Gold and silver *Satmana* weighing one hundred *rattis* (=180 grains) and its subdivisions are used as media of exchange. *Satmana* has been divided into *ardhasatmana* (one-half) of fifty *rattis* or fortyfive grains and *padarthasatmana* (one-eighth) of twelve and half *rattis* or twentytwo and half grains. Importance of *Satmana* is discussed in the Brahmanas. Panini, Manu and Yajnavalkya have discussed in details the importance of *satmana* as a metallic currency and its economic importance. *Satmana, hiranva* and *niska* were used in sale and purchase.

Barter existed along with the metallic coins and it is known as *Niskaraya* in the *Ramayana*. At times, the price of a cow is referred to in terms of money. In agricultural economy, the cows had their own significance. The sacrificial fees included cows and money both. Cow was accepted as the standard of value. *Niska* was the commonest coin of the period. Silver coins (*Rajatas*) were also used as means of exchange. Copper coins also came to be used in later times. Money used to indicate prices of commodities.

The Buddhist texts refer to *Kahapana* (*Karshapana*) for a coin. Coins of gold, silver, bronze and copper were known to the Buddhist authors and these were known as *Kamsa, Pada, Masaka, Kakanika, Karshapana*, etc. and their values varied with time and place. According to *Vinayapitaka* (III. 45) five *masakas* were equal to one *pada*. The introduction of a regular system of coinage in business transactions is one of the most remarkable features of the Buddhist period. Though barter was also there, coins were also used as media of exchange and gold and silver dust were also used. The Indians paid tribute to Darius in gold dust according to Herodotus.

It appears that metal currency had come to be known and established by the sixth century B. C. and a regular and circular flat cut from the pieces of a hammered metal sheet were used as coins. Symbols were marked on them by punches and as such they came to be known as punchmarked coins. Thousands of punchmarked coins have come to light from different parts of the country. Uninscribed punchmarked coins were minted from the sixth century B. C. onwards and were in circulation for many centuries. Buddhist literature is replete with details regarding the circulation of coined money. A merchant of Benares had eighty *Kotis* (crores) of rupees. Nearly fiftyfour crores of gold coins were spent by Anathapindaka on the Jetavana site. The people had reached a very high degree of excellence in applying the principle of monetary science, knew the mysteries of legal tenders and the intricacies of standard and token coinage.

Rapson, Allan and others have tried to trace the foreign influence on the early Indian punchmarked coins but their suggestion is wide the mark as we know that the origin of the punchmarked coins is much earlier and primitive. Symbols like sun, mountain, trees, human figures, dogs, scorpions, snakes, rabbits etc. suggest that the punchmarked coins were issued even earlier than the sixth century B. C. They are indigenous coins of India and perhaps the same as *satmana* of the texts. Walsh has suggested that the symbols on the punchmarked coins are continuation of the seal designs from Mohenjodaro.

Kosambi (D. D.) suggests that the sun symbol is the symbol of sovereignty, the crescent on arches is a Mauryan symbol and is associated with sovereignty. He further believes that the symbol is associated with a dynasty and the symbol with human figures and without the *chakra* indicate coins of the tribal republics or oligarchies; the symbol of three ovals and a tangent is an Asokan one which occurs very often signifying long reign. It is also sometimes found on the coins of Bindusara, and the peacock on arches perhaps originates from the totem of peacock associated with the Mauryas. Foucher believes that the elephant and the bull on coins explain the relation of the Mauryas with religion of Lord Buddha. The tree-in-railing also represents the *Sambodhi* and the arches undoubtedly signify the Buddhist conception of Stupa.

The sun and the six-armed symbol are quite regular on the punchmarked coins of the Nanda period and they may be the symbols of the kings and treasury officials like *Laksanadhyaksa* and *Rupadarsaka* of Kautilya. India certainly knew very early the value of the royal prerogative and monopoly in the issue of coins. The Nandas might have issued coins on a large scale and they were minted in regular series. The coins were also issued by the guilds. The state may have allowed in some cases the right of private coinage.

Kautilya refers to the extensive use of coins as a medium of exchange—

(i) *Pana (*silver coin with a denomination of one, one-half, one-fourth and one-eighth*)*;

*(*ii*) Masaka*—copper coins with same denomination and the quarter piece is known as *Kakini.*

Major transactions were made through the silver *panas* and officials received their salaries in *panas.* The punchmarked coins were available in silver and copper. There was a mint supervised by an officer appointed for the purpose. Money was handled with experience and a money economy was an established fact in the Mauryan period. Fines prescribed by Kautilya afford a clue to the values of gold and silver. The rate of exchange between copper and silver and between silver and gold bullion varied from time to time. Coins of different metals were valued according to their own metallic content. The exchange value of gold and silver coins in term of the copper *pana* varied from time to time.

Silver *panas* were issued by authorised guilds of traders and bankers under the authority of a city or town *(nigama).* From Manu we learn that small pieces of gold were used in paying fines. Gold *masaka* was also used on another occasion. The exchange ratio between gold and silver was 1 : 16 and the rate of exchange between silver and copper was 1 : 16 or 20. In the Gupta period gold and silver coins were legal tenders. Two kinds of gold coins were issued—one containing the weight of the Indo-Scythian *Dinara* and the other as that prescribed by Manu. *Nasik Cave Inscription No. 12* mentions the rate of exchange between *Suvarna* and

Karshapana at 1 : 35, Narada suggests that *Karshapana* in South India was a silver *pana.* The rate of exchange between gold and silver coin was maintalned between 1 : 30 and 1 : 48.

In the post-Mauryan period, the Indo-Greeks under Menander and Appolodotus had large commercial transactions and large number of their coins have been found at Barygaza. It is interesting to note that *tetradrachms* are comparatively abundant and they are commoner than *drachms* and these presuppose an increased trade with the Western world. The Sakas, the Phlavas and the Kushanas issued coins which by and large followed the Indo-Greek standard. The Kushanas were the first to issue gold coins which continued for a few generation from the time of the Weima Kadphises. No silver coins of the Kushanas have come to light so far.

Artisans from Alexandaria helped both the Romans, and Kushanas, mints and that is why there is a close similarity between the gold coins of the two empires even in matters of denominations. The Kushhnas adjusted the weight standard of their dinaras to the silver coins current in their realm according to contemporary ratio between gold and silver. The small transactions were met with barter system and by the Kushana coppers. The Satvahanas minted lead and potin (base silver) coins.

Gold coin became popular under the Guptas. As many as sixteen hoards of Gupta coins have been discovered so far from different parts of the country. In ancient India, the accepted mode of storing wealth was hoarding and the object was certainly to meet the future emergencies and calamities. Money exchange was a regular feature and it enabled men to meet the wants of everyday life. The standard value of money depended upon the uniform standard of weight of the metal. The earliest Gupta coins follow the standard of their late Kushana prototypes. Towards the end of the reign of Skandaguupta, the gold coins became much heavier but the gold content decreased. The percentage of gold in the coin declined as a natural corollary to the gradual deterioration of economic condition and the economic stringencies caused by the repeated Huna invasion.

Skandagupta had even to resort to the doubtful expedient of a debasement in currency in order to remedy the financial distress of his administration. The Guptas also issued silver coins and their weight and fabric are closely similar to the satrapal coins. Copper coins were also issued as regular currency during the Gupta period. Various types of silver and copper coins of the Gupta period have come to light which show originality. Copper coins were also used as regular currency and were very useful media for daily transactions.

Manu, Narada and Brhaspati give lists of different denominations of currency ;—

Manu	*Narada*	*Brhaspati*
5 *Krsnala* 1 *masa*	4 *Kakini* 1 *masa* or 1 *pala* or 1 *pana*	1 Karsapana *(copper)* =1 pana *(copper)* or 1 *andika*
16 *masa* = 1 *Suvarna*	20 *masas*— 1 *Karshapana* or *Pana* (silver)	4 *Karsapana* or *andika* = *1 dhanak*
4 *suvarna*=1 *Pala* or *Niska*	4 *Karshapana* = 1 *andika*	12 *Dhanka*=1 *suvarna* *(*dinara*)*
10 *Palas* = 1 *Dharana* or *Niska*	4 *Karshapano* = 1 *dhanak* or *Andika* 12 *dhanaka* or = 1 *suvarna* 48 *karsapana* or *Dinara*	4 *suvarna*=1 *niska*

Sukra

Gold = 10 silver

Silver = 80 copper

Copper = 1½ Zinc

Zinc = 2 Tin or 3 lead

Copper = 6 iron.

Money economy had replaced barter much earlier.

Variations

80 *rattis* — 1 *karsapana (copper)*

Silver

— 2 rattis = 1 *masa*

16 *masa* = 1 *dharana*
10 *dharana* = 1 *satmana*

Gold —

5 *rattis* = 1 *masa*
16 *masa* = 1 *suvarna*
4 *suvarna* = 1 *pala* or *niska*
10 *palas* = 1 *dharona*

The *Baigram Copperplate (EI*—XXI. 81-82*)* says that sixteen *rupakas* are equal to one *dinara*. In this background the tables of Narada and Brhaspati hardly correspond to the actual weights and denominations of the Gupta coinage. Rapson had rightly pointed out that the simple weight system of the books donot afford satisfactory explanation of the weights of ancient Indian coins in general. The *smritikaras* were thinking in terms of goldsmiths, weights. The *Dinaras* had a very high purchasing power and so was the case with silver. Ordinary daily transactions were made by cowries which served as the local and popular exchange. Barter system also existed side by side with currency.

In the post-Gupta period rulers of Kashmir, Thaneshwar, Bengal and other places issued their own coins for circulation in their respective territories. Imitations of the Gupta coins were also there. Day to day transactions came to be performed with the help of the cowries though Hiuentsang noticed that the use of gold and silver was also prevalent. Copper currency was also popular. Toramana's copper currency is well known. Besides cowries, Hiuentsang refers to small pearls as the media of exchange and this is noticed by Kalhan also. The copperplate inscriptions of the Senas refer to *Kaparadakapurana* (*cowrie* and *karsapana*). No Pala or Sena coins have been discovered. Other rulers of different dynasties issued their own coins with the ratio given below—

— 20 *cowries* = 1 *Kakini*
— 4 *Kakinis* = 1 copper *pana*
— 16 *panas* = 1 silver *drama*

These were the standard weights in the early medieval period. The standard money appears to have been *dramma* and the Siyadoni inscriptions mention four varieties of *dramma*, viz.—

(i) *Panchiyakadramma*
(ii) *Vigrahapaladramma*
(iii) *Vigrahapalasulikadramma*
(iv) *Srimadadivarahadramma*

Other known varieties were *Varahakayavimsaopka*, *Kakini* *Vartaka* and *Kapardaka*. The cowrie was from the early times used as a monetary token in Kashmir as elsewhere in India. The Charyapadas also refer to the use of cowrie. *Dramma* was gold and *Rupaka* was silver, Other types of known currency in the medieval, period were *Dinara*, *suvarna*, *niska*, *parutha*, *rupaka*, *karsapana*, *kakini*, *vartika*, *kavaddikadinara*,*vimsopaka*, *tanka*, *bhagaka*, *rupaka*, *vimasatika*, *niska*, *surpa*, *dramma*, *bhimaprivadramma*, *visalaprivadramma*, *rupaka*, *ardharupaka*, *dramma*, etc. are found in the literature of Rajasthana, Hem Chandra, Chalukya Iascriptions, Parmara records etc. In the *Manasollasa* (II., p. 104), we come across the term *Nisakadhikarina* which irdicates the existence of mints and its officers. According to *Lilavati*, twenty *vartakas* (*karpardakas*) were equal to one *kakini*, four *kakinis* were equal to one *pana*, sixteen *panas* equal to one *dramma* and sixteen *drammas* equal to one *Niska*.

The media of exchange and their replacement by metallic currency depended on the stage of social development or evolution. The means of exchange varied from region to region. *Dinara* appears as a current coin and finds its place in the later *Smritis* and epigraphic records. Money, in India, regulated only a part of the land since we find barter prevalent even in foreign trade. The usual ratio between gold, silver and copper was not steady and varied between 16 : 1: 14 : 1; 8 : 1 and the exchange rate between gold and copper 57 : 1 (16 : 1 : 80 ; 1 — according to Sukra). The variation in exchange is explained by the variations in regional distribution of metals. In the *Nidanakatha* we have a reference to lead *karsapana*. Kautilya insisted on the strict maintenance of standard weight. According to Buddhaghosh. *rupasutra* is the essence of coinage and currency. Patanjali refers to *rupatvka* and Kautilya to *rupadarsaka.*

Barter as a medium of exchange :—

Barter as a system of exchange was prevalent since the Vedic period and continued to be so for a considerable period. The cow was also a medium of exchange and the word *sahasrarha* indicated the value of a thousand cows. The word *hiranya-satmanam* has also been considered as gold worth a hundred cows. The word *pratipana* in the *AV* has been interpreted as barter and the same in the *Vajasenayi Samhita* has been taken to denote bargaining and selling. In the Vedic period barter was the major medium of exchange. Panini refers to it more than once. The words *Nimana* (exchange of goods by agreement) and *Vasana* (a piece of cloth as medium of eachange) indicate the existence of the practice of barter in the age of Panini. Cow continued to be a medium of exchange. Panini refers to several units of value as media of exchange in bartering goods of one kind for another viz—*Kamsa Surap, Khari, Anjali, Acita, Goni*, etc.

Barter was also in vogue in the age of the *Jatakas.* The commodity exchanged were not identical. Coins were also in use and so both the systems were in vogue. Kautilya condemns barter as one of the causes contributing towards the depletion of the public treasury. He defines barter as *parivartana* by stating that it was act of exchanging government articles for similar goods of others. He condemned barter as a means of exchange in respect of gems and articles of higher and inferior values, He was careful enough to note its utility in the sphere of foreign trade. He distinguished between state merchandise and imported goods which were to be distributed in several markets for sale. Such merchandise was to be sold in foreign countries on a barter basis. The superintendent of commerce, after comparing local with foreign produce obtainable in barter and meeting all the incidental charges, had to determine whether such a transaction yielded any margin of profit. If no profit could be realised by selling the local produce in foreign markets, the superintendent had to consider whether such goods could be profitably bartered for alien products.

Sesamum and salt were not to be sold or bartered according to Baudhayana and Vasistha. Narada and Apastamba also banned the barter of sesamum. *Vasistha* observed that it was permissible to barter seasmum, rice, cooked food, learning and a slave, all of a particular kind, each for its own specimen and one for the other. Apastamba, first declaring that barter of men, condiments, and food, even of one kind for another was unlawful, later on stated that food slaves, and condiments, perfumes, and learning, could be exchanged for their own prototypes. Although he did not specifically exclude Brahmanas from the barter or sale of these articles, it is evident that the Brahmanas were also permitted to indulge in such barters. Apastamba held that, except in times of distress, a Brahmana could trade in marketable goods.

Katyayana has also referred to the rule of barter but his rules were rejected by Patanjali. In the days of Patanjali barter was a common mode of transaction not only for ordinary goods but also for bigger commodities like *Ratha*, Camel, blankets, ete. It is evident from Panini that barter in certain respect was more significant and useful than the coinags itself and the people could properly manage their daily affairs. The enumeration of exchange and barter system side by side with that of coinage speaks of the changing pattern of social development. Even by the time of Patanjali, the system of coinage and barter had not lost its popularity. Patanjali envisages three parties in barter transactions—seller, the buyer and the witness. Patanjali strikes even much bigger deals by referring to consignments of five hundred boats of rafts. Barter declined only after the system of coinage became perfect and more effective. Barter and exchange came to be confined to small section of the poor people in course of time.

It emerged in certain contingencies, for example, when a wanderer obtained a meal from a woodlander for a gold pin or when among humble folk a dog was bought for a *Kahapana* plus a cloak. Barter was permitted in special commodities by Gautama and Vasistha and was also prescribed for the *Samgha* in certain cases to whom the use of money was forbidden. Rice was still a standard of value. In spite of the use of metallic currency, barter continued to exist. Potters bartered their pots with rice, barley and pulse and traders are said to have twice or thrice their value through barter. The *Vinaya* texts forbid monks to practice barter or sale. A wide variety of articles were used for the purposes of barter such as food, clothing. domestic animals etc, all of ordinary daily use.

People could manage their daily affairs and the system of barter continued to dominate in different spheres of life for long even after the introduction of regular coinage. But it should be borne in mind that barter is possible only under extremely simple condition of exchange. With the advent of specialised industry, the barter became impossible. Metal supplemented and supplanted other commodities as money came to serve both as a medium of exchange and as a measure of value. The invention of money was one of the potent causes of all round economic activity as is evident from Kautilya's *Arthashastra*.

Numismatic ıerms from Inscriptions :—

We get reference to coinage and currency in coutemporary literature and inscriptions. Numismatic terms are available to us from inscriptional sources. The earliest reference to *Karsapana* is found in the *Nasik cave Inscription* (*EI*—VIII. 82 ff). We know that in Nahapana's time silver *karsapana* weighed about 36 grains and 35 of them made one *suvarna*. The *Nasik cave Inscription* refers to the rate of monthly interest being fixed on one per cent. The term *Kusanamule* has been interpreted as some sort of coin designatiion. The *Nanaght eave Inscription* of Naganika refers to *Karsapan* and *rupam*. Bhattasali has equated *Kahana* and *karsapan* with *kapardakapurana*, The punchmarked coins came to be known as puranas. *Rupaka* in the sense of silver coin is mentioned in the *Baigram Copperplate Inscription* of 445 A, D. The *Nagarjunikondai Inscription* of Viraaparisadatta refers to *Dinarimasaka* which apparently refers to the prevalent from of coinage under the Ishvakus of Krishna-Gunur region. *Dinara* is mentioaed in the *Sanchi Stone Inseriptions* of Chandragupta II, *Damodarpur Copperplates, Baigram C. P., Paharpur C. P,. Faridpur Plate,* etc. *Dinara* differed in form and contents from place to place.

In Kashmir,*Dinara* had a very low value. It has been calculated that one *Dinara* was equal to one hundred and twentyone grains. The sale rate in the Gupta period was calculated in coins. Gold coins became rare after the Gupta period. In later periods, *Drammas* (weighing 31 grains) came to be recognised as legal tender. Various inscriptions of the medieval period refer to the prevalence of *Drammas*. The *Siyadoni Inscription* reveals some of the detailed features about the *dramma* currency. The prevalence of different varieties of currency in different parts of India is an indication of the fact that economic relationship between different classes was based on some well-established system. *Drammas* used to be of gold but Bhaskaracharya holds that it also used to be of silver and he says that sixteen silver *drammas* were equal to one gold *niska*.

Vartaka and *Kapardaka* stood for cowrie. Both metal and cowrie currency were in use. Ordinary village folks transacted their business through cowries. *Puranas*, *Kapardakapuranas*, *Palasa*, *Masas* and *Gunjas* as currency are found in a number of inscriptions. A closer scrutiny of the epigraphic materials is bound to throw an interesting light on tha numismatic data.

Economic data from the coins :—

The ancient Indians knew the use of coins and they issued coins of various denominations in gold, copper, silver, lead, tin etc. according to the time and circumstances, Moulds of different ages have been discovered. A large varieties of punchmarked coins have been discovered which go to show that the use of *Panas* in the transactions and for the payment of salaries had come to stay. Both the literary and epigraphic sources enable us to state that currency, in one form or other, had come to stay and banking institutions had developed to a great extent. Even money-lending as a business could not have flourished without the regular use of money in daily transactions. Coins played a popular role in the economic life of the people in different periods.

The economic condition during the early period was based on mixed farming and metal was scarcely used. Local trade was carried by barter. Gradually with the discovery of iron, situation changed and we have instances of self-sufficing communities though barter continued as one of the media of exchange. By sixth century B. C. coins came to be used and trade increased. Sravasti, Taxila, Pataliputra, Varanasi, Vaisali, Videha and various other towns in North India came into prominence. The vigorous trade presupposes the extensive use of money. The guilds minted coins for trade purposes and the rulers too realised the importance of coinage for the prosperity of their kingdoms. Coinage was not a monopoly and a sole privilege of the State from the earliest times. The State stepped in only when its advantages became apparent and its importance realised. J. N. Banerji holds that the marks on the punchmarked coins were those of a central authority that guaranteed the genuineness of the metal and correetness of the weight. Some of the punchmarked coins might have been issued by the private authorities, bankers or otherwise. The punchmarked coins bear two distinct characteristics and may be classified under Pre-Mauryan and Mauryan heads. The former comprise mostly of the private issues of the bankers and the guilds and the latter represent the stable political state when they were thoroughly controlled by the State. Punchmarked coins appear to have been in use in the time of Buddha ghosh (5-6th Century A. D.) and were current side by side with the State issues like the silver coins of the Sakas and gold coins of the Guptas. The old types *Karsapanas* must have been the same issues that find mention in the *Visuddhimagga.*

The centre of economie activities shifted from private hands and corporate bodies to royal organisation. Currency became a state monopoly under the Mauryas. Here we have definite regulation regarding the mintage of coinage. Coins were manufactured for two purposes — (i, for storing in king's treasury and (ii) for currency under the supervision of State officers or the Mint master, *Laksnadhvaksa.* Coins were also minted from bullion bought by the people for which manufacturing charges were made and royalties levied. The legal tenders known as *Koshapravesva* were issued in royal mint and *Vyavaharika* in general use but could not be stored in royal treasury, Practice of minting coins among the guilds or private citizens was still recognised, though now under State supervision and in royal mint and they were required to pay a certain part of their bullion as levy charges. These coins were manufactured out of indigenous silver which is really interesting in the content of the economic history of northern India during second century B. C. and third century A. D. The co-relation of the ancient trade routes with findspots of the punchmarked coins is interesting and points to the economic activities.

The Kushanas changed the economic and specifically the monetary order. They struck coins only in gold and copper from the time of Wema Kadphises. The territory of the Kushanas extended from the Oxus to the Ganga. Larger use of gold coins under the Kushanas reflects the prosperous economic condition of the country and this helped a brisk trade with the outside world placing Indian economy on a sound footing. The Satvahana coins is indigenons. The presence of their coins with the Roman coins in the Cholamandal confirms India's brisk trade with Rome. The Guptas continued the tradition of gold coins but they did not keep up the copper tradition. The growth of self-sufficient economic units precluded the use of coins by the rural peasantry and renderiag the use of money lees important— a fact that continued for centuries after that.

II

Banking

Banking was known in ancient India. The system of indigenous banking in India is very old and has been in force for many centuries but it was different from the present European content. The essence of banking may be taken to be the manipulation of credit. It rendered immense services to the trade and industry. The spirit of banking, the need for capital, the productivity of capital as well as the inducement for the accumulation of capital in the form of interest and the utility of credit was fully recognised by the early Indians.

Lending and receiving deposits were the main functions of the bank and this phenomenon is seen in ancient India from the earliest periods. According to Mitaksara, whatever is placed under the control of the creditor by debtor as security is called *Adhi* or a pledge and there were eighteen kinds of pledge. Varieties of interests are also mentioned in the lawbooks. Rules on deposits adumberated in the *Smritis* show that to receive and properly discharge a deposit from a person was a very common institution. The laws of debts applied to deposits (*Upanidhi*).

There were two prerequisites of banking — (i) the practice of lending at interest, and (ii) the practice of depositing property for safety. These two aspects of banking are found in ancient India. An honest depositary was more reliable. Safety of wealth was the prime consideration. Under the dominating demands of the market, the two perquisites into one led to the formation of a banking system. According to Kautilya, the rules of *Upanidhi* (deposit) apply to *Niksepa* (investment).

Some varieties of deposits are distinguished —

(i Open deposits are of two kinds ;—

(a) *Niksepa* made in presence of the bailee after showing him the nature and quantity of the thing deposited;

(b) *Nyasa*—entrusted in the presence of the bailee with the members of his family.

(ii) Sealed deposits (*Aupanidhika*)

(iii) *Anavahita* —a deposit made over by the depositors to another saying a certain person deposited this wealth with me and you shall deliver it to him.

(iv) *Yachitaka* (a loan for use)

(v) *Silpinyasa* (a deposit with an artist)

(vi) *Pratinyasa* (a deposit made in return for a deposit received).

Guilds and corporations who received deposits and lent them to businessmen also functioned as banks. Kautilya says— "King's agents disguished as merchants may borrow from corporations bar gold and coin gold for various kinds of merchandise to be procured from abroad (V. 2). Transactions of borrowing and lending are intimately associated with merchahts and manufacturing activities and big magnates are attracted by the banking facilities (VII. 11). In course of time, banking became an appendage of other business.

Deposits were invested in business and it was profitable for Joint stock concerns to receive them. Through such efforts middlemens' share could be dispensed with, The industrial guilds became banks par excellence. Kautilya (IV. 1) permits them to receive deposits.

Guilds acted as banks, trustees and executors of charitable endowments. Capital amounts were received as fixed deposits never to be repaid. Interests were paid in kind to the beneficiaries of endowments. A weavers'guild at Govardhana received money from king Usavadata and out of the interest gave twelve *karsapanas* as clothmoney to each of the twelve monks in the Nasik Cave. Another sum was invested in another guild for money on behalf of the same monks. For the well-being and happiness of all beings, in order to provide medicine for the sick of the *Samgha* of monks, irrespective of sect, dwellings in the monastery on Mt, Trirasmi, a perpetual endowment was invested for all time to come with guilds (guilds of potters and guilds of Odayantrikas, of oil pressures) by a lay devotee Visnudatta. This was duly proclaimed and registered in the record room of the town hall.

In *Mathura Inscription* of Haviska's time, a lord makes an endownent out of the monthly interest whereof one hundred Brahmanas should be served daily and the destitute and hungry according to a prescribed schedule. The guild bank also accepted immovable property and assigned iuterest out of its income. A *Junnar Buddhist Cave Inscription* records the investment of money with the guilds of bamboo workers and braziers. The rate of interest on fixed deposits in the *Nasik Inseription* where *Karsapanas* are not to be paid is one *pratika* monthly for the hundred wheu the deposit is two thousand *karsapanas* and three-fourth *Pratika* monthly for the hundred when the deposit is one thousand *karsapanas*, that is, twelve percent per annum and nine percent per annum accoardingly. The rate in the *Mathura Inscription* is much higher, The rates differed from place to placc and time to time according to the credit of the banks.

The banking operation of guilds and businessman was not confined to any particular place or time, The Gupta Iuscriptions refer to similar benefactions of deposits of which interest alone was appropriated for charity on behalf of the *bhiksus* and the capital kept intact. Banking was evidently prominent in Vaisali, The Siyadoni Inscription (912 A, D,) records that the merchants gave to deity the capital of one thousaud three hundred fifty *Srimadivara-hadramma* which had been invested with the distillers of spirituous liquors. The merchants used to borrow capitals from indigenous bankers,

South Indian inscriptions have references to these types of bankings and philanthropic activities and the rate of interest is a bit higher. In south India gifts were also accepted by the village unions.

The relationship between the depositor and depositary had to be harmonius. The depositor had to take some precautions and the primary condition of it was confidence. Deposits damaged or lost had to be recouped or had to be made good. The depositary was invested with specific responsibilities in regard to the deposit entrusted to him. Like deposits, pledges also formed one of the main banking facilities. Pledges were of different kinds. Narada defined a pledge as a commodity to which a title was given (*adhikariyate*). Brhaspati merely called it a *bandha.* Pledges were productive and non-productive, beneficial and non-beneficial, redeemable and non-redeemable, movable or immovable, to be kept only or used; to be released at any time or limited to a period, stated in writing or verbally stipulated before witnesses, specified or unspecified etc.

Value.

Sukra has propounded the marginal theory of uility on the theory of demand and supply as the sole determinant of the exchange value. Value emerges only in relation to human wants. He has attempted at a sccientific analysis of the causes and conditions of value—

(i) Price depends upon the utility of the article. No utility, no price. Until the article has value for some one, it cannot be a marketable commodity. A thing should have value in use in order that it may possess value in exchange—

(ii) the object must possess some intrinsic value to satisfy some human want. The prices of commodities are high or low according as they do or do not possess attributes—

(iii) people pay no price for free bounties of nature. Sukra added the concept of scarcity to the concept of utility to explain the fact of price or value in exchange;

(iv) The greater the efforts spent, the greater its value—

(v) Sometimes scarcity is the sole condition of their value.

There were various types of banks, viz.—Commercial, Industrial Agricultural and the Government banks. These banks had in common one aspect and that was depositing and advancing. Commercial banks were engaged in financing trade and commerce. Industrial banks financed industry and advanced loans to industrial interprises. Agricultural banks provided big and short term loans and also accepted immovable property like corn field etc. They managed the property and assigned interest on its income. Banks were extremely useful for the community. They brought lenders and borrowers together and kept the money mobile on which depended the economic well-being of the nation. The investments were announced in the *Nigamasabha*. Banks also served as trustees and executors of endowments. Deposits were known as *Niksepa*. Capital amounts were received as fixed deposits and the rate of interest on such deposits differed on the basis of nature and amount deposited. *Upantdhi* was sealed deposit. Kautilya has suggested three elements of interest theory =

(1) general interest theory,

(2) transactional interest theory ; and

(3) insurance interest theory against risk—The Smritis lay down various rates of interest. Monetary interests were of three kinds *Chakravridhi* (compound interest), *Kalavridhi* (periodical interest) and *Karitavridhi* (stipulated interest). Exorbitant rents were condemned. Kautilya prescribed fines for taking heavier interest than that allowed by law.

III

Money-Lending

Money-lending was known and practised in ancient India. The minute regulations as to loans of money and interest thereon could not have occurred in Kautilya and other lawbooks, had not money-lending been a well-known business. Manu, while discussing the eighteen kinds of disputes to be settled by a king, gave first place to the settlement of debt repayment. A happy man is he who is indebted to none, The debts passed on to one's descendants and borrowed debts could accumulare to crores.

Money introduces a new factor and the growth of trade is modified under the stress of currency and credit.

It also accentuated economic disparity among the classes and extended its protective wings to speculative traders. Merchants set-up business by contracting a loan. The *Gahapaii* offered wealth to shop-keepers on loan. Usury was quite widespread and was one of the main sources of income. According to Kautilya interest on stock or loan invested for business (*praksepa*) is fixed at one-half of profit, payable every year and accumulable upto a sum twice the principal. There were cases of borrowing and lending in cash and kind to be repaid with interest. Agricultural loans and famine doles were not unknown.

Rules for creditors and debtors were well-established. The creditor might demand a surety for payment. For the clearance of unpaid debts the heir of the former was liable. Kautilya says—"In the absence of the creditor or mediator, the amount of debt may be kept in the custody of village elders and the debtor may have the pledge property reduced, or with its value fixed at the time and with no interest chargeable for the future, the pledge may be left where it is. Whcre there is any risc in the value of the pledge, or when it is apprehended that it may be depreciated or lost in the nearfuture, the pledge may, with permission from the judges (*Dharmastha*), or on the evidence furnished by the officer incharge of pledge sell the pledge either in the presence of the debtor or under the presidency of the experts who can see whether such apprehension is justified". (III. 12).

Debts might be secured or unsecured. Big commercial deals were made on credit on the security of a ring. The debtors' daughter might be taken as a slave to secure against accumlated interests. The pledge did not acquire proprietory rights on the pledge which was ruled by the laws of deposit. It was to be reconveyed when the debt was paid up. For every payment the creditor must always give the debtor a receipt and an acquittance on clearance. There was considerable use of the instruments of credit and merchants sometimes transacted amongst themselves on credit without any security.

Interest

The just and normal rate of Interest is laid down by the lawgivers at 1¼% per month or 15% per annum (Manu-VIII. 140). Baudhayana, Manu and Vasistha prescribe the above rate. Narayana, Raghavananda, Nandana and Yajnavalikya (II.37) suggest that the rate of 15% is for debt secured by a pledge, for unsecured loans, the rates are 2, 3, 4, 5 in 100 according to the *varnas*.

Brahmana— 24% per annum
Ksatriya — 36% per annum
Vaisya— 48% per annum
Sudra— 60% per annum,

Differential customary rates are also found In Kautilya and apart from the just rate (= 1¼% known as *dharmya*) these are five, ten and twenty, respectively.

Commercial rate—60 per cent per annum
rate among the forest areas—120% per anuum
rate among the sea traders—240%—(As.III.II),

Special interest was known as compound interest (*chakravridhi*), periodical interest (*kalavridhi*—interest to be paid with the principal withih a fixed period), stipulated interest (*karita*), corporal interest (*kayina*), daily interest (*sikhavridhi*) and use of a pledge (*bhogalabha*) when no interest is claimed. Interest can accumulate upto a sum equal to the principal after which it ceases.

In connection with the commercial interst, the problem pertaining to the interest also depended on caste or varna. Manu relates how a creditor could recover just two, three, four and five in the hundred per month according to varna. Money-lending was mainly the business of the vaisyas. Baudhayan says that when a Brahmana practised these functions of a vaisya he should be treated like a Sudra. There were several rates pertaining to different kinds of interest.

Usury.

Though usury was condemned, it was still a legalised occupation and according to Baudhayana, a vaisya could live by usury. Vasistha raised a voice against usury. Visnu also condemned it. Narada allowed a vaisya to meet hisends by resorting to usury but a Brahman was never to resort to it. Usury was a regular feature anp an approved form of business. The lawgivers have adjusted their rules accordingly. Manu says— "Interest payable with the principal shall never exceed the sum, or in the case of grain, fruit, wool or beasts of burden, four times the loan" (Manu-VIII.151). In course of time, it became elastic—gold may grow to twice, grain to thrice, clothes to four times, liquids octuple, interest on women and cattle may grow to their issue. No interest accrues for a pledged loan where the pledge yields profits nor such a pledge can be given away or sold for default (*AS*-III.12). A moratorium of int rest is prescribed for persons engaged in long sacrifices, diseased, living in teachers' place, minor and pauper or an imprisoned man,

Both Kautilya and Yajnavalkya think that the welfare of the state requires a strict security of lending transactions and pre-cribe fines for transgression. Manu forbids six special forms of interestt (VIII.153). While in earlier books, money-lending is tolerated, it is condemned in emphatic terms in later works obviously becase it degenerated into usury.

Debt contracted for the benefit of joint family must be discharged by the members evee if they have separated afterwards. A husband is responsible for his wife's borrowing not a wife for her hdsband's except in the case of herdsmen, hunters, vintners, dancers, washermen, who live and earn with their wives. (*AS*-III.II). Visnu holds that the husband or son is not to pay the debt of his wife or mother except in case of herdsmen, hunters etc. Money due by a surety, a commercial debt, a bridal fee, debts contracted of a spirituous liquor, or in gambling and a fine shall not involve the sons of the debtor according to Gautama. Repudiating a lawful debt is condemned and the perjurer becomes an outcaste.

Debt suits were resorted to. The bond was the most effective document. A recognised form of payment of both principal and interest was by personal labour (*kayika*) and the creditor should claim this as right if the debtor failed in his stipulation. The creditor might even take somebody in slavery in lieu of debt and accumulated interest. The debtor also stood at a disadvantage with the creditor irrespective of their castes. He had to face severe humiliations.

Interests ranged between nine and twentyfive percent per annum. Between tenth and twelfty centuries, the normal rate of interests in Tanjore appears to have been twelve and half per cent.

CHAPTER—13

Economic Activities of Kautilyan State

The Kautilyan State was founded on strong economic basis and was in its ends and functions an economic state for the common good. The State participated in the national activity to further material progress and stringent laws did not in all cases respect the traditional privileges. We have in Kautilya examples of nationalisation of certain industries and attempts were made to have some sorts of control over the means of production. The existence of monopolies alongside private enterprise is indicative of mixed economy. His scheme of economic planning aims at the integral conservation of state resources. Economic planning covered three aspects—

(i) conservation of resources for sustenance of rural and urban areas;

(ii) defence of the state;

(iii) consolidation of the potential for attack in emergencies.

He outlined the technique for control and regulation of trade, factory planning, wage structure and bonus etc. Farm planning is elaborately discussed and farming wages are also indicated. The entire structure of planning was dominated by the idea of loyalty to the state and economic planning itself was aimed at strengthening the state so as to render it impregnable from within and invincible from without. He took meticulous care in all fields of economic activities beginning from the village to the state level. The state controlled a good deal of economic life not only by controlling agriculture, industry and trade but also by being the largest employer.

The state is sustained by the revenue it collects from its subjects. The *Vartta* sustains the treasury and the army and it, then, becomes possible for the state to hold its own people and enemies in check. Kautilyan emphasis is on the facilities for the pursuit of *Vartta*—agriculture, cattle tending and trade. The most important of the three is agriculture. An important state activity is settlement on unoccupied land, that is, occupation and settlement of a new virgin territory. He discusses the relative merit of different types of land that may be selected for reclamation and settlement.

Settlement on unoccupied land was to be in the form of villages each containing from one hundred to five hundred families belonging mostly to the Sudra agricultural class. People may be induced to go there on liberal terms and concessions. All unoccupied land is supposed to belong to the king or to the state. Land, ready for agriculture, should be given to those who are willing to pay taxes but the grants are to be made for life only implying that the farmers are not full owners. If grantees failed to till the land they were replaced by others or the state got them tilled by servants and traders. Waste land is to be allowed to be brought under cultivation by whosoever choses to do so and the land is not to be taken away from him. The farmer, here, should be supposed to be a tenant on state land. The state is to help settlers with seeds, cattle and even cash for reclaiming the land. These are loans to be recovered according to tenant's convenience. Other concessions included remission of taxes at the time of settlement. Such activity is taken by the state. Though these villages enjoyed certain privileges and concessions, they were, in course of time, to be treated in the same way as the other older villages.

State recognised private ownership in land though the state owned crown lands existed side by side. All unoccupied land is assumed to belong to the state. A large part of agriculture in its vast crown land was under the direct control of the state. It was the business of the state to organise and extend agricultural productivity. Even at the village level, it was thoroughly organised. villages were divided from fiscal point of view. The state farm was under the control of *Sitadhyaksa* (superintendent of Agriculture). Broeler holds the view that his activity extended over the entire agricultural economy in the State. Scholars are not unanimous on this point. Agriculture was the most important and universal industry. From a fiscal point of view, Kautilya classifies villages as revenue free, villages paying revenue in the form of military service, in grain, cattle, cash, forest produce or labour. The *Grambhrtakas* (potter, blacksmith, barber, washermen etc.) were paid in cash but were liable to be called upon to cultivate holdings which were left fallow.

The agricultural operations on the crownland were carried out under the supervision of *Sitadhyaksa.* The lands were ploughed and sown by *Dasas, Karmakaras, Dandapratikaras* etc. These were slaves and labourers in the state services and included offenders who were unable to pay fines. Other types of land were worked by *Karsaka* or farmers whose work, too, was sometimes controlled by the state through *Samaharta* and his assistants. The produce brought to the store by *Sitadhyaksa* is called *Sita* and it is distinguished from *Bhaga.* Statistical accounts about lands and property in the villages are to be maintained by the *Gopas* and *Sthanikas* who work under *Samaharta* and they had nothing to do with *Sitadhyaksa.* The State also maintained cattle farms, dairy farms, and employed necessary staff for the purpose. It was for the king to protect agriculture against oppressive burdens of fines, unpaid labour and excessive taxes.

Ksetrika (owner of the field) is distinguished from the *Upavasa* (tenant). Only unclaimed fields or disputed land without legal owners reverted to the State. The sale of land is also regulated by certain laws but the right of alienation is characteristic of ownership. The *Brahmadeya* lands are distinguished from the tax-paying lands. Mines are owned by the state. Grants of lands are also recommended to the *Adhyaksas,* accounts and other lower officers without the right of sale or mortgage indicating thereby that they have only the usufruct of the land, neither full ownership nor exemption from taxes.

Irrigation works formed an important activity of the State. The *Setu* refers to the dam which is built for holding water. Two types of *Setu* are mentioned

(i) *Sahodaka Setu* (Tanks. wells etc.)
(ii) *Aharadaka Setu* (storing of water in reservoirs)

Private owned irrigation tanks also existed there. Cooperative effort was encouraged and the members were forced to contribute their share of labour and expenses. Operation relating to agriculture have been discussed in details. What could be directly cultivated by the state were to be leased out to crop-sharers (*ardhasitikas*, at the rate of 50%) and who could keep one fourth or one-fifth of the produce (*Svaviryopajivinas*) also, The labourers on land got $1\frac{1}{4}$% over and above the food. Possibly that held good with private owners also. These applied to workers in vegetable gardens, fruit orchards, flower gardens, and to herdsmen. If no prior agreement about the wage was made, the tiller and the herdsmen was to get one-tenth of the crop or butter.

Through *Samaharta* and his assistants the State maintained a full record of all agricultural holdings with details about different types of fields and crops. It also kept a watch over the sowing and harvesting of crops, in order that it may not be cheated of its legitimate dues. The state officers collected statistics about land and agriculture for the purposes of assessment of land revenue. The collection of statistics has been a constant feature of India's land economy. Agricultural fields formed major parts of State revenue-*Sita* and *bhaga*. Taxes like *rastra*, *kara*, *bali* and *bhaga* possibly fell mostly on farmers. *Udakabhaga* (a rate for water) was also to be paid. The *Gopas* and *Sthanikas* were not connected with the actual collection of revenue.

Quite a substantial revenue came to the state from its forest wealth. *Dravyavana* supplied timbers and woods of all kinds and base metal like iron, copper, lead etc; and *Hastivana* supplied elephants. These forests belonged to the state. State also planted forests. There was a special store house for forest produce. Pastures belonged to the State and it was under the supervision of *Vivitadhyaksa* (superintendent of Pastures). The State was also the owner of large herd of cattle under *Godhayaksa* who maintained a complete record of each individual animal in every herd belonging to the state. A similar record was to be maintained of all animals of private individuals by the village and district officials under

Samaharta. Thus a list of cattle stock was ensured. In times of emergency, the state demand was a part of animal themselves. Cattle tending contributed much less to economy than agriculture and trade.

In the organisation of industry and trade, Kautilyan state was marked by an all-round advance and the state played a much larger part than ever in the economic sector of the national life. A sense of security was generated and that acted as a stimulus to production and exchange. Due attention was paid to the maintenance of roadways. Megasthenes was struck by the royal road from the Indus to Pataliputra and from there to the mouth of the Ganges. Various roads and cross-current routes are mentioned.

The trade, by and large, was under the State control and the Superintendent of trade (*Panyadhyaksa*) was incharge of this department. He fixed prices of all commodities after taking into consideration all factors involved in production and distribution. A profit of five and ten per cent respectively on indigenous and foreign goods respectively was also fixed. Heavy fines were prescribed for exceeding these limits. He intervened and centralised such commodities of which there was a glut and thereby maintained the price level. The entire supply is purchased and the sale is routed through the agency of the State. The state struck a reasonable balance between the interests of the state traders and the customers. The *Samsthadhyaksa* (superintendent of Market) looked after the interests of the customers so that traders and artisans might not cheat them by fraud in weighing or by supplying inferior quality of goods. It was his duty to see that second hand goods or stolen property are not sold in the market.

Apart from the private trade, the State itself engaged in trade on an extensive scale. State trading was in the hands of *Panyadhyaksa*. He had to be an expert and thoroughly posted with the latest position of supply and demand with respect to various commodities. While fixing prices he had to keep in mind the interest of the customers. The State goods was known as *Rajapanya*, consisting of both indigenous and imported goods. The State also engaged itself in imported trade. State goods were sold by State servnts. Private traders were also pressed into service for this purpose. There were also commission agents. The *Panyadhyaksa* was also responsible for the export of State goods to foreign lands and also investigated the possibility of bartering state goods for those from foreign lands (*Panyapratipanya*). The import of goods was to be encouraged and for this exemptions were allowed to shippers and caravans.

All imported goods were liable to sulka or duty which were to be collected by *Sulkadhyaksa* (superintendent of tolls or customs). *Sulka* refers not only to custom duties on imports and exports but also to excise duties on indigenous goods. Excise duties were to be collected at the gates. Goods were not to be sold at the place of production. The list of sutiable articles included practically everything from flowers to diamonds. Tariffs varying from one-sixth to one-twentieth are mentioned. There are details about the custom duty on foreign goods. Merchants had to pay road cess (*vartani*) for safe passage. A fair deal was ensured to the foreign merchants. Some articles were also declared duty free, for example, goods required for marriage, sacrifice, sacred rites, import of arms, jewels, grains, cattle and goods which are of great benefit to the State.

Kautilya prefers land route to water route and is in favour of a route to the South, as against the Himalayan route. He preferred southern route because it brought many valuable commodities like pearls, diamonds, conchshell and plenty of gold. Goods brought along the waterways had to pay duty and other charges at the ports. The state maintained a fleet of boats which were let out on hire to traders and fishermen and were under the charge of *Navadhyaksa* (superintendent of ships). State protected the internal traders in caravans (*Sartha*) and they had to pay *Vartani* (road cess) at the frontier post. The officer was made responsible for any loss suffered. The traders had to pay *Ativahika* (escort charges). Weights and measures used in trade were to be made by the State under the supervision of an officer known as *Pautavadhyaksa* (officer-in-charge of standardisation).

Different standards were there for different purposes—

(i) one for measuring goods received in the treasury (*avamana*)

(ii) another (a lower one) for the use in trade (*vyavaharika*)

(iii) a lower still for payments to be measured out from the treasury (*bhajana*)

(iv) lowest of all for the deliveries to be made to the place (*antahpurbhajana*)

(v) weights and measures were to be inspected every four month.

Coins are to be manufactured by the *Laksanadhyaksa.*

Two kinds of currency are—

(i) one for use in trade (*Vyavahiriki*)

(ii) the other for treasury (*Koshapravesya*)

The *Rupadarsaka* (inspector of coins) looked after the circulation of money. Various charges are mentioned in connection with currency. Currencies other than officials were also allowed.

More income is expected to the state from the mining and manufacturing industries apart from the incomes rooted in *vartta.* Mines were in charge of the *Akaradhyaksa* (superintendent of mines) who was expert in geology, mining and metallurgy. Processes of refining gold and silver are mentioned and other metals are copper, lead, tin, iron etc. Diamond and rubies are also mentioned. The characteristics of ores are also described. Salt mines were supervised by *Lavanadhyaksa.* Though all mines were state property, not all of them were worked directly by the state. There were officers like *Svarnadhyaksa* (superintendent of gold), *lohadhyaksa* (superintendent of iron), *Khanyadhyaksa* (superintendent of mines and metals) who were responsible for the manufacture and sale of mineral objects. There were royal goldsmiths and they were subjected to strict supervision. Mine products were turned into articles of use in the respective workshop or factories (*Karmantas*).

Twelve Kinds of income are derived from mines, viz. *Mulya* (price), *Bhaga* (share), *Vyaji* (sort of sale tax), *Parigha* (a kind of protective duty), *Atyaya* (penalty for violation of state monopoly), *Sulka* (custom duty), *Vaidharana* (compensation for transfer of state rights of sale to private individuals), *Danda* (fine), *Rupa* (inspection fee in various denomination), *Rupaka* (charge for manufacture), *Dhatu* (metals) and *Panya* (commodities). Mining was also the source of implements of war.

The textile industry was under the charge or *Sutradhyaksa* who looked after the manufacture of all types of textile. He was also possibly incharge of the clothing and equipment for the army. The *Rathadhyaksa* was incharge of chariots and carriages. There does not seem to be much scope left for private enterprise in industry though there were some artisans and craftsmen who carried on their business independently and for them the guild had to stand guarantee. The state kept strict control over artisans' work. Rules are laid down governing the rates of interest on debts, loans with or without mortgage, recovery of loans and misuse of pledge etc. Rules for partnership were also laid down and so also the rules revoking the sale or purchase. Constitution and functions of the guild are not precisely stated.

Dasas and *Karmakaras* are also mentioned and their rights and duties are prescribed. An economy based on slavery is not a very sound proposition for early Indian economic history. Kautilya mentions Sudras as the principal agricultural community and they are not slaves. The Sudras constituted the principal labouring classes though we cannot preclude the possibility of slaves being used in productive works specially in agriculture or mines. Western type of slavery was not known in ancient India. According to Basham, the human regulations about the treatment of slaves in ancient India, (*dasa*) specially in the *As.*, are probably unique in the records of any ancient civilisation. The economic relationship between the lower class producers and upper class enjoyers is indicative of early Indian feudalism according to Baikov. The producers of wealth, the two lower *Varnas*, were exploited by the higher *Varnas* with whom the state was in alliance. It can not be denied that there was exploitation of labour of the lower orders, particularly of the large mass of Sudras but the use of the 'feudal' does not seem to be proper and appropriate in the context of Kautilya. as already disussed ear her.

Economic activities were strictly under the control of the State. The different sources of income are together called '*Ayasarira*' (the body of income) and these are then reclassed under seven other heads called '*Ayamukha*' (the source of income). Expenditure is shown under fifteen heads and this is called '*Vyavasarika*' (the body of expenditure). The state created a buffer stock and prevented a wide fluctuation of prices. The royal buffer stock exercised a great influence on state economy. The *Panyadhyaksa* and the *Kosthagaradhyaksa* were the two pillars of economic life in the Kautilyan scheme of things.

Kautilya regarded treasury as more important than the army, which is raised with the help of treasury and besides it helps the pursuit of *Dharma* and *Kama*. All sorts of sources for filling up the treasury are mentioned and dubious ways of replenishing treasury are ;—

(i) the property of the heretical *Samghas* or temples may be appropriated through the trustees who are to give out that it is burnt down or lost;

(ii) the miraculous manifestation of a deity should be arranand fairs and festivals started in its honour to provide a source of income to the state;—a number of ways in which credulity of the people is to be exploited;

(iii) secret agents posing as traders should receive deposits or loans on a large scale and get the whole stolen at night—

(iv) confiscation of property by involving suspected persons in serious crimes through state agents; forty ways of embezzlement have been mentioned.

The rigid state control of economy indicates economic planning by the state on a wide scale. Kautilya gives us an idea of planned economy. The emphasis is on control. He recognises the supremacy of the *Vartta* for wealth, the entire administration of economic affairs was conducted by means of specialised governmental agencies. He regarded merchants as an honoured and important unit in the national economy. The state protected people against profiteering and blackmarketing. In certain spheres decentralisation was also advocated and encouraged. The state offered doles to the needy. Adulterers of grains and other things were penalised.

Kautilya suggested that kings in financial troubles could collect revenue by demand. Extraordinary and irregular means of raising revenue have been advocated by him. He has suggested that acquisition and security of property is dependent upon peace and industry. He has advocated a system of financial administration through a judicious policy of placing a premium on efficiency, honesty and punctuality.

The state controlled not only all the internal trade routes but also most of the land and sea routes which linked India to the Mediterranean lands. The intimate association of the Industrial and commercial classes with the court becomes clear from the rules (*AS*-II.4) relating to the planned settlement of the fortified capital. The economic policy of the Kautilyan state was aimed at a systematic control of the evils of a free competitive economy partly by direct participation and partly by bureaucratie paternalism. The industrial rules and laws were regulated by the State to the satisfaction of both the employers and the employees. His State was comprehensive in character. The aim of the state was a prosperous economy and augmentation of national wealth, and he suggested that '*Artha*' was the supreme constituent of *Danda*. Kautilyan state assumed the nature of a welfare state. The scope of state activity is all embracing. '*Artha*' was vital in all respects. He says—"Wealth passes away from the simpletons who consult stars too much, for wealth is the star of wealth, what can the constellations do ?"—(*AS*-IX. IV)

CHAPTER—14

Temple Economy

The temples in the early medieval period of Indian history played a very prominent role in the economic history. Temples were repositories of wealth. The temples amassed huge wealths composed of cash, money, jewellery, precious stones, bars of gold, etc. The temples owned shops and received donations from various sources. Temple was a city in miniature having a full-fledged staff to manage its affairs. It served the purpose of a bank, received deposits of donations and endowments which it held as trust funds. Endowments included assignment of taxes on trade (*PIHC*-1953-p.163 ff.)

Deposits in temples were regarded as safe because of their sanctity. Peoples placed their funds on terms and conditions settled between the parties. Guilds also showed their interest in the maintenance of temples and collected stipulated amount from their respective members and paid them regularly to the beneficiary of endowments. Manu prescribes punishment for persons in interfering with the temple property. Kautilya's *Devatadhyaksa* brought together all the wealths of the temples in the kingdom so that the king could use it in emergency. Sukra appreciates the necessity of appointing officials for temples. Kings also kept their treasures stored in the temples. Even kings borrowed money from temples in times of distress.

The temple management committee was known as *Gosthi* and it was in existence as early as second century B.C.(*EI*-II.,p.87). The *Gosthikas* were selected from among the most respected inhabitants of the locality and eight such trustees are mentioned in a chalukya grant (*IA-XI*.337 ff). Names of trustees are also mentioned in the *Mont Abu Jain Inscription* (*EI*-VIII.200 ff). Kalhan refers to the corporation of priests or *Parishad*. The temple priests became very influential with the emergence of temples as wealthy landlords. The royal custom house was also required to pay some amount towards the maintenance of religious institutions. Various inscriptions furnish details of the various taxes transferred to the temples. Great temples possessed large estates and enormous wealth. A considerable portion of nations wealth was concentrated in these institutions.

The temple estates were originally managed by the Brahmanas and herdmen of other cultivators, merchants and artisan castes. There was a large body of staff at temples including scribes, craftsmen, singers, musicians, drummers, barbers, dancing girls, menials and others. Somnath temple was endowed with more than ten thousand villages. Under Parantaka I, Uttarmerur was a Brahmana village whose government was entirely in the hands of the *Sabha* of the Brahmanas. The temple establishment was considerably large in which hundreds of people were employed in diverse capacities. The *Sahasbahu Temple Inscription* refers to the appointment of carpenters, engineers, carmen and others (*IA-XV*.33). Potters, oilmen, washermen, florists etc. were also donated to the temples. These were attached to the manors of their lord. A study of the inscriptions of the Venkteswar temple has revealed that the lands of the shrine were given out to peasants who appear to have been share-croppers and that the share of the temple varied from 51°/₀ to 71°/₀. The large scale settlement of Brahmanas was a measure to counterbalance the dangerous feudal forces by ritual means. References have been made to the salary of the temple boys and priests and the same practice was followed in respect of Jain temples. The local inhabitants had to pay taxes.

Various inscriptions refer to the grant of lands in favour of temples which had vast landed property. The *Timana (grant) inscription* refers to a grant of land to the temple for maintenence. The names of cultivators who were transferred along with the land or were appointed to plough the land are also given. The inscription further records the donations of annual grants of money (*IA-XI*. 337-40). The *Timana Inscription* further states that nine *Gosthikas* (trustees) were appointed to administer the revenues of a religious institution, a *Gosthi* (*EI-XI*. 52.54). The *Jalor stone Inscription* also refers to *Ahar*. There is a reference to a *Gosthi* in charge of the trust property of a temple. The Mathura *Prasasti* of Vijayapala reveals the same system of temple administration. The temple of Somnatha had one Ganda Brhaspati as the state officer incharge of religious endowments (*EI-XXI*.No.1). It appears that the state appointed administrators also for the great temples.

We find priests claiming proprietory rights over the property of the temples and monasteries. Jaya managed the estates of the temples of Chembrolu (*EI-V1*5l) and assigned pieces of land to various functionaries. Allhanadevi endowed two villages for the maintenance of a temple (*EI-V.142*). Instances can be multiplied (*EI-II*.8,18,19 etc.). A Gahadawal record records that out of the *Kumaradronas* of wheat realised from the water machine (*araghatta*) at a certain village, five dronas were allotted to a certain village temple cleaner - (*EI-XXXIII*.244-45). K.A.N.Shastri interprets *Dasabandha* as the earmarking for a specific public purpose of a one-tenth of a given source of revenue. A chahamana inscription records that a certain *Ranaka* exempted the dancing girls of a temple from paying *Dasabandha* (*DHNI*- II-1113).

K.V. Raman has described at length the management and functionaries of temples in connection with his study of the *Srivaradarajaswami Temple* of Kanchi. The functionaries included temple engineers, reciters, carriers of holy waters and also those who did manual work like the Car-pullers, Torch-bearers, Carpenters, Cooks, Smiths etc. The work shows the nature and extent of royal control over temple affairs and indicates that one of the officers of the temple was known as *Srikaryam*.In Karnataka, an increasing number of gifts enriched the monasteries and temples. The role of temple as a landowner and also of its wealth and material power finds mention in a number of inscriptions of North and South India.

The Mahayan text *Sravakabhumi* of Asanga represents a landmark in the development of the theory and practice of *Dana*. It accords sanction to the donations of slaves and gives a religious justification for giving nonslaves to *Sramanas* and Brahmanas. Husbandmen and cattle were given to monasteries along with fields which were to be cultivated by them. The *Samantapasadika* of

Buddhaghosh mentions '*Aramikas*' who were presented to the *Samghas* and they were required to perform agricultural work. The commentary on *Samantapasadika* (*Sarathadipani* composed in Ceylon in 12th century A. D.) suggests that the *Aramikas* tilled the land of the monastery. They were temporary tenants on the *Samgha* lands. Buddhaghosh favoured the practice of entrusting the entire arable land to the tenants themselves.

The practice of extracting surplus labour for purposes of agricultural production was there and this may have been prevalent in varying degrees in Hindu temples. The surplus had to be spent within the villages and preferably on public works and public worship. The temple constructions were entiraly financed by the land revenue in kind. In Karnataka 893 the surplus produce of ricefields attached to a temple was utilised to build anther shrine. A plate from Rajasthan (*EI*-XXXIII. 244 ff) and a Chalukya inscription (*IA*-XI.337-40) record the grant of peasants to the temples. The temples and monasteries provided favourable conditions for the formation of feudal agrarian relationship. The donations made to the temples gave them feudal dimensions. Appadorai has rightly emphasised the role of early medieval South Indian temple as a big employer and most of the temple employees under the Cholas were remunerated through land and the practice was very much in vogue as is evident from the vast mass of inscriptions. This was indicative of the fact that in spite of the money economy being practised the Chola rulers preferred feudalisation of temple authority. The temple authorities developed land for the progress of temple work. The temples needed a large number of workers to work in their lands.

An important development under the Palas was the rise of religious intermediaries in land. The endowments were enjoyed by the Savite, Vaishnavite and Buddhist temples. Educational centres like Nalanda, Udantpur, Vikramasila, Jagadalla etc. possessed hundreds of villages. A sizeable number of villages was held by priests, temples and monasteries. They constituted important intermediaries in land thus giving rise to a class of landed barons. Under the Palas and the Pratiharas, individual rights in land were created. The case of the town of Gwalior, which gave away several pieces of land to local temples is a good illustration of how communal property was turned into feudal property (*EI*-I.No.20). These temples got their lands cultivated by others. The traders also paid to the temples. Undabhatta, the governor of Siyadoni, made over a fixed part of the customs levied on goods to the temple of Visnu (*EI*-I.No.21). Incomes from sixteen shops were also allotted to to Visnu. Incomes from tolls and customs were granted to temples in return for spiritual benefit. The control of temples over trade hindered its development and helped and maintained feudal conditions. The basic characteristic of feudal economy was that local needs were locally satisfied. Under the Pratiharas, temples of Rajasthan secured self-sufficiency by consolidating their holdings in land (*EI*-XIV.p.177). The villagers helped sustain self-sufficiency of big monasteries by making various kinds of services available to them. The practice of religious grants was more widespread under the Pratiharas and in parts of Gujrat and Rajasthan religious grantees emerged as landed intermediaries in charge of police and fiscal administration. This practice of grants to priests may be compared to the practice of benefices given to the Church in medieval Europe. The significance of land grants to Brahmanas in Orissa lay in the fact that the grantees brought knowledge and inculcated loyalty among the aboriginals. They were given all fiscal rights and they maintained self-sufficient rural economy. Grants to temples and Brahmanas were also made under the Rastrakutas. They gave more coercive and administrative powers. The number of religious intermediaries under the Rastrakutas was considerable. Feudal conditions helped the spread of temples, and the feudal lords created freeholdings in favour of religious institutions.

The land and village endowments gave rise to feudal relationship leading to the depression of peasantry. Tenants and employees protested against unjust measures adopted by the temple authorities. There are illustrations to show that the peasants and employees were subjected to greater economic hardships. New levies were collected in the name of the temple. At times some fiscal rites were also transferred to the temples. Royal enquiries into the temple accounts were made by the authorities of the state. A record of the eighth century A. D. from the konkan areas shows that the villages and money granted to the temple were to be managed by the village merchants of five or ten who were instructed to supervise the annual religious provisions and were exempt from payment of tolls and rations for royal officers. There are records to show that in South India the rural agricultural people migrated as a measure of protest against the exploitative conditions.

The Pallavas and Cholas made valuable donations to various temples from 8th century onwards and the temple personnel began to expand. Mass desertion under acute distress caused by overtaxation are mentioned in the *Brhadanardiya Purana* and in the *Nitivakyamrta* of Somadeva Suri. Some inscriptions reveal that peasants left villages on account of their inability to pay taxes (*JOI*-1979, P.81). Mr. Y. Gopalareddy thinks that it indicated the curtailment of socio-economic mobility or the subjection of artisans and craftsmen to a state approaching serfdom. Royal patronage to temples produced political returns and served as an important instruments by which existing institutions could be adopted to serve royal purpose. Under the Pallavas a fundamental change occevered in the conception of what constitutes sovereignty. The giving of gifts now became the central constituent of sovereignty. This spift during the Pallava rule concides with the beginnings of temple buildings associated with puranic deities (Siva and Visnu). Under the Cholas, this madel of kingly generosity was the basis for generous noyal endowment of temples and the eslablishment of *brahmadayas*. In the public display of sovercignty, temple construction had begen to play apeculiar and powerful role. Visnu in the temple is treated as a king and association of Visnu with kingship is also wellknown freom other areas. Temples were fundamental for the maintenance of kingship. Temple conflicts were solved by the sovereigns. Temples played a central role in south Indian society in view of there indispensaoility to structures of authority at various level. The huge construtive activities on the hills would have reguired the large and surained imports of skilled and unskilled labourers.

The Buddhist monasteries in Western India (Nasik, Junar, Karle, Nanaghat etc.) had accumulated vast wealth which they invested in trade and business. Their mercantile function was to supply capital loans and provisions to trade caravans. These monasteries were located near the important interconnecting trade routes of Western India. The *Mulasarvastivadinas* and the *Mahasamghika* Schools of Buddhism made it possible for the monasteries to indulge in such apparently mundane pursuits (*JBBRAS*-1956-, P. 50 ff.).

The instability and chaos resulting from the later day feudal wars must have been one of the important reasons for the ineffectiveness of guilds. The guilds had to face strong competition in the form of temples who could obviously be regarded as safer bodies for the purposes of managing permanent deposits. In one case the temple built by the chief of a guild received endowment from the members. The definite downgrading of the industrial labour in the medieval period (10th-12th centuries) affected the status of the guilds. In some Chahman records we find temples accepting endowments and paying interests. The sanctity attached to the property of a temple led people to find more stability in the temples than in other bodies.

State derived revenue from the pilgrim tax. The temple estates in southern India were particularly extensive as well as organised. The richest of the feudal lords were of course the collective owners, the Hindu temples and the monasteries. The Brahmana Sabha differed from the village community in that it was councl consisting of landowners only. The temples did not divide up their possessions, on the contrary they added to them receiving all manners of donations from rulers. feudal lords, village communities. Lands donated to temples were exempt from taxation and enjoyed various forms of immunity. A temple land had to be free of revenue obligations. It became common practice for temples to receive donations of whole villages whose inhabitants worked the land, for priests or monks. Temples collected rent in kind and the cultivators were obliged to supply the temples with all essentials for the observance of religious ceremonies. A king of Kashmir confiscated temple villages. Harsha of Kashmir (1089-1101) indulged in reckless spoliation of temples to save himself from grave financial difficulties and even appointed a prefect for the overthrow of divine images.

The South Indian temples formed the centres of economic life. The surplus was spent in building magnificient temples and also for making provisions for *Ghatikas* for learned men. The *brahmadeya* (brahmana villages) differed from others in several ways — these were prosperous peasants' settlements granted to Brahmanas for their support. Solemn ceremonies attended the grant of such villages and the new village, thus created, was made independent of local peasants' control to which it had previously been subject. This was a recognition of the special character of the Brahmadeya grant. Under Parantaka-I, Uttarmerur was a Brahman village with unlimited powers.

Rajendra Chola commanded the villagers to supply servants to the temple and to pay for their support therein. About fifteen hundred employees of various categories were to be supported by the villagers from which they came in addition to usual taxes they had to pay (*Tanjore Inscriptions*—II.Nos.57,69; *SSI*-II.320). Tanjore temple was a centre for the redistribution of money and livestock—the key sources of Indian peasant economy. The temple records were scientifically maintained and occasionally audited by the Government auditors. The *Brahmadeya* villages played a crucial role in spreading the Brahmanical ideas and were the local nucleus of the Chola power structure. The temple authorities also played their part in the development of feudal economy. A Chinese account of 732 A. D. confirms that the practice of donating villages together with the villagers to temples and monasteries was fairly common throughout the length and breadth of the country.

The feudal trait of the early medieval South Indian temples owes a great deal to the *Devadana gifts* made in perpetuity. Lands belonged to the temples as *Devadanam*. These lands were exempt from taxes and in some places from *Jeevitha* also. The first systematic attempt to spread the temple cult in South India was made in the pre-Pallava times and from seventh century A. D. onwards the practice of temple construction tended to become widespread. Temples were involved in the struggle for land rights. Royal patronage provided political returns.

Rajaraja (995-1010) effected changes in the landownership in certain cases with a view to stepping up the revenue of the big temples. Titles of previous holders were cancelled, cultivators were evicted and proprietorship was transferred to the temple and a perennial and permanent fund of revenue was endowed to the temple. The deity of Thanjuvara temple became owner of land in all the fortyfive villages and the dominating classes were looked upon as agents of the deity having delegated powers.

The peasantry had to bear the burden of wasteful exdenditure in the temple. Temples represented the institutionalised religious feudal organ. Landgrants gave them feudal character. These were important landowning institutions and they leased out their lands to tenants. The grant of fiscal privileges, ranging from eighteen to fifty, caused greater economic subjections to the peasants and new levies increased the burden of taxation.

Even among the merchants of South India the practice of granting land to religious institutions was quite common. Donations were made by mercantile guilds, merchant corporation, and other groups. A record of Chalukya Someswara IV (1184-1200) refers to several trade guilds as collectively exempting a temple from payment of a specific levy. This may have provided a sound economic basis for the temple merchant symbiosis. The possibility of any economic competition between the temples and the mercantile group was precluded by the fact that the temple authorities did not invest in trade. The temple artisans did not produce marketable goods. They lent out their bulk of money to the local assemblies or a part of it to the merchants. The mercantile community derived a part of their capital from the temple and that was enough to inspire their charity to the religious institutions. They also participated in the actual temple management and were closely assciated with the temple administration and exercised control over its economic resources.

As landlords, the temples had a large number of tenants under them. Temples dominated the then economic activities to a great extent, The royal visits to temples were availed of by local gentry to apply for lands or leases of waste lands and along with such grants and leases terms of cultivation are specified. Records of royal visits to temples were maintained, The temples were also the owners of slaves. The temple authorities advanced loans to villagers and others on the usual rate of twelve per cent interest. It also came to the rescue of those who were in financial distress. In realising interest, the temple authorities were held responsible by the village assembly.

The oppressive tax collectors once brought the whole district to ruin. After a great hue and cry, the people ultimately succeeded and got the list of admittedly payable taxes fixed and the result was engraved on the temple wall. We have examples of excessive taxation details of thirtythree separate taxes out of which thirty two were entered by the temple and one by the Crown. The temple authorities leased out the right to collect taxes and these collections were made in an oppressive manner. The officials enforced the unjust taxes demanded by the temple authorities. The sacerdotal authority was hand in glove with the royal authority.

Expenses were met for all religious festivals. Remission of taxes on lands belonging to god is also recorded in a number of inscriptions. Additional grants were made for reviving festivals in temples. Several tax free temple lands are mentioned in the inscriptions. Donations were also made after conquests. At times, the Assembly sold the rights of collecting market fees in the villages to temples. Lands were also mortgaged to the temples. The temple authorities also sold and purchased lands. An inscription records an agreement given by the assembly in consideration of a lump sum to pay all taxes and a quarter of land endowed for the purpose of worship in the temple. Priestly institution seems to have emerged as important intermediaries in lands. Temples also placed restrictions on the movement of the tenants. The collective landgrants were issued to the Brahmanas when it was considered expedient to defend the border of a king by settling a number of brahmanas there. *Agrahara* was popular in the sense of rent-free holding in possession of Brahmanas. The South Indian temple records throw sufficient light on the historical development of South Indian village community, land tenures and social stratification. South Indian socio-economic and political structure was integrated with the control of land.

Chapter—15

Economic Status of a Common Man in Ancient India.

The old attitude of describing everything ancient Indian as glorious or golden is fast vanishing and a new scientific perspective of looking at things objectively is emerging. Thanks to the efforts of new school of historians, sociologists and social scientists, anthropologists, analysts and thinkers of both east and West, ancient India is now being studied in the background of socio-economic factors and all types of materials are being studied to find out the nature of material culture and the status of common man. Hard material facts are exposed with crude reality. In the court or divine literature, the pulsating life of the endless mass of humanity is not felt.

The material for people's life is to be sought in people's literature though even this could not escape the tampering of a motivated compiler. The Sanskrit literature was interpolated in consonance with the propaganda of divinity, brahman class and sacredness of the *Varnasrama* system. The Indian masses were fed with the spoons of sacerdotal superiority in every turn of their lives. Brahmanical polity has been hammered in the body politic of which Manu is the ideal. The social life of commoners expresses itself into colourful stories which reflect clearly the beliefs, manners, customs, and means of livelihood of the masses. These sources afford glimpses into the real human life of ancient India.

Literary sources are a mine of information for a study of the living condition of the poor, common and the destitute. The producers of wealth, like the workers and peasants, were deprived of the means of production and constituted the most exploited and oppressed class. They constituted the overwhelming majority coming within the category of the people,better known as common man. The poverty of the general masses does not seem to have been the creation of either the muslims or the Britishers. The majority was forced by the classes in whom the profession of a hired labourer was as much hereditary as the poverty connected with it (*Jataka*-III. 325, 409, 444). They were born and bred in poverty and bore their sad lot as a natural necessity in order to leave it to their childern as a legacy. Serving classes were composed of all possible elements of population differing in points of race and professional work. Evils of unequal distribution were very keenly felt. The misery of the homeless and the starving poor is described in the *Rigveda* (X. 117). The various literary sources give us a vivid picture of wretched poverty of a section of the brahmanas (*SRK*-XXXIX; *SK*-III. 17). The position of lower classes was not better and social classes remained unchanged even long after Buddha's time.

The brahmanical supremacy installed in the minds of lower orders and the propagation of the idea that the brahmanas were not only the temporal lords but also the spiritual lords gradually gained ground and they came to be regarded as vice-regents of gods. A State, under such circumstances, can elevate or degrade a class. Changing of social classes is to be seen in the case not only of Viswamitra and others but in the case of Brahmanas and Kshatriyas, in the elevation of the son of a Sudra woman, Ailus Kavasha to priestood, kingship etc. At the earliest stage we do not find incrustation of the classes into castes, neither do the question of food and touch taboo take its rise. Brahmana Vamadeva ate dog's meat at the place of a Chandala in hunger.

The economic factors connected with occupation determined the status of a class or caste and its elevation to higher level or degradation was due to its political influence. A certain amount of criticism and opposition had already begun against the unlimited claims of the brahmanas in the *Upnishads*. Aiteraya (after whom *Aiteraya Brahman* is named) was the son of an unmarried Sudra mother; Kavasha, Vatsa and Satyakama Jabala, were of impure descent. Dubious is the origin of Kunti, Viswamitra, Menaka, Parasar, Urvasi and fisher-woman mother of Vedavyasa. The *Atharvaveda* gives the credit of developing the art of agriculture to Prthu Vainya. The *Upanishads*, Jain and Budhist literature contain iota of protest against certain social privileges and rights. The poor is derided at in both serious and humorous stories and are painted black and in classical dramas they act as comic figures.

That poverty was a regular feature of society is evident from the *Dighanikaya* where the king exhorts his son to eradicate poverty and unemployment from his land by distributing work and money among the people. The general life of the farmers was one of poverty. They could hardly make both ends meet. Poverty is living death. To serve another for one's keep is a dog's life and not worthy of an aryan. Worldly wealth was looked on as morally desirable for ordinary man and indeed essential to a full and civilised life.

Impoverished peoples are prone to disaffection and rebellion against the State. Economic impoverishment may cause disaffection which may ultimately lead to a revolt (*AS*-VII. 5). If everybody is not pre-occupied with his own work or not provided with jobs or agricultural pursuits, chances of rebellion would be greater. There was a state of want and penury among many people and they had no resources to fall back upon. There was no attempt to find out the causes of this widespread want among the people and to formulate a policy to reduce poverty and want.

In the age of Buddha the economic development ushered in an era of material prosperity concentrated in the hands of wealthy people. While the rich possessed eighty kotis, a worker hardly earned a *Masaka* or a half *Masaka* by which he could hardly support himself or his mother (*Jataka*-V. 383). We have references to estates having one thousand *Karishas* and farmers owning five hundred ploughs (*Jataka*-IV. 276) but what was the condition of a free labourer ?—they were gradually impoverished and ground down. They ranked even below the slave.

A study of the *Jatakas* clearly reveals to us a picture of social decadance, the distressing sight of a sturdy peasants leaving at home their own empty barns and swelling the ranks of landless agricultural labourers to toil as hirelings on the estates of landlords (*Jatakas*-I 390). The profession connected with sickle and yoke was looked down upon by both the Jainas and the Buddhists. They branded

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cultivators as engaged in a mean and violent work. In their scales of values the labourers are ranked with slaves (DN-1. 51; AN-1.145, 206). The dichotomy of the rich and the poor and the disregard of the village workers are important traits of Buddha's world view since Buddhism was the expression of the urban economic culture complex. The *Sethis* constituted the chief stronghold of Buddhism.

The slaves, labourers and cultivators are called people of lower category in the Jain texts and these people are debarred from initiation. In the urban cultural complex artisans, craftsmen, traders, financiers and others overshadowed royal and sacerdotal classes and we have a picture of economic prosperity in a number of towns. Both Mahavir and Buddha favoured merchants and craftsmen. Common people took to agriculture and arts and crafts connected with it. Even the Brahmanas began to adopt a variety of profession with astonishing frequency (*Jataka* V-471; 127; IV.207; II. 20 etc.)

The king is called *Visamatta* (or the devourer of subjects). The king is frequently seen ruining the cultivators with fleecing demands. An organised system of poor relief was demanded by the paternal conception of government as is evident from Gautama (IX. 9 ff) and Kautilya (II. 1). To heavy taxation, forced labour, the visitation of the kings and their officers were added periodical dearths and famines to afflict and impoverish the peasants. Whole villages sometimes emigrated *enmasse* to escape the attention of extortionate tax collectors. Services in labour and gifts of promises are expected by the king and his officers while on tour and this might put small rural communities into serious difficulties.

The donees maintained slaves and servants who begged alms on their behalf (*Jataka*-III. 49). Female slaves and dancing girls are seen in the brahmanical and Jain temples (*EI*-XIII. 7A). Inscriptions from Karle and Nasik Caves and those from the time of Kanishka and Huviska (*EI*-VIII-177) and those of the Sanchi topes are a sad commentary on a monastic vow of poverty. The upper class appropriated national wealth and political power whereas slaves and hirelings remained underdogs. The landless remained at the lowest of the social order and economic ladder. Wealth was the

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yardstick of social precedence. Lower classes were not given secrets of knowledge and they were not united. The reality was that they were not allowed to unite. The subjects had to regulate their business in accordance with whims and caprices of the kings.

Panini speaks of the people living in the *Gana* way and of the *Ganas* being involved in a violent struggle between the upholders of the old way of life and those advocating a life based on private property. Panini holds that all propertied families were against the *Gana* type of life (IV. 2. 117-118), *Utsedhalivinah* denoted a corporation of labourers of various descriptions. We have no distinct record of any economic organisation amongst the exploited classes. Even the Mauryan state did not signify any appreciable amelioration of the lot of the poor—the disparity between the rich and the poor is indicated in the *Arthashastra* of Kautilya.

The deplorable condition of the worker is manifest from the injunctions of Asoka who urgs upon his officers to met out proper treatment to slaves and workers as part of one's religious duties (*RE*-XI). He appointed *Dharmamahamatras* for the welfare of the *bhrtakas* and instructed people to treat them affectionately (*RE* V, IX, XI, and XIII). The *Suttanipata* (I. 2.25) speaks of *bhrtaka*) in a contemptible tone. He was made to work for long hours under trying conditions and his general standard of living was very low. The *bhrtakas* had to make both ends meet with great difficulty (*Jataka*-I.475; II. 139; III. 325; 406,444). The *bhrtaka* denoted a man receiving wage or salary.

Poor people lived on sour gruel (*Jataka*-III. 406). They could not afford more than the coarest rice gruel for their diet. The policy of protecting the interests of common man (*AS*-IV. 2,77) by curbing the greeds of businessmen and profiteers proved a thin veneer for the oppression of bureaucrats. The difference in the scale of pay in Kautilya (48000.60 *panas*) is indicative of the fact that there was a wide gulf between the rich and the poor. The ploughman in the Kushana relief is generally shown as a plebeian stripped down for work. Patanjali mentions that the monthly wage of labourers in the post-mauryan period were five, six or ten *karsapanas*. Normally labourers worked for one-fourth *karsapana* a day, that is, seven and half *Kar-*

spanas a month. Here we have to note that Kautilya's one and half *karsapana* was raised to seven and half *karsapanas*.

Aiteraya Brahmana (VII.29.3) says "Like Vaisya...tributary to another, to be eaten up by another, to be slain at will." The *Jatakas* (III. 513-14) refer to several ancient risings of Sudras and Vaisyas, of the whole people against a ruler, of sudras and vaisyas beating the ruler and his advisor to death and in another case (VI. 156 ff) the people hastened to kill the tyrannical ruler with sticks and stones. Ram killed a sudra slave. The *Sangama* literature refers to a war between a ruler and his shepherd slaves resulting in the death of the former in about 190 B. C. The *Jataka* accounts preserve description of the brutal oppression of the slaves and hirelings. They were even murdered. Extreme hardships and terrible burden had made their lot miserable to an irreparable extent. The barbarous, savage and brutal treatment of the slaves had gone to such an extent that even the Buddha had to advise his followers not to go to that extent. Most of such revolts have not even been recorded or noticed.

Nishadas and *Kiratas* were the most exploited people. *Nishadas* are first mentioned in the *Rudradhyaya* of the *Yajurveda.* We learn from the *MBH* that the revolt led by Vena, a well known leader of the *Nishadas*, sprang from those wicked people who lived in hills and forests. The story is repeated in the *Visnu, Bhagwat* and *Padmapuranas. Nishadas* are described as black like crow and low-statured short-armed high cheek boned etc. The Sudras had no deity. The fourth *varna* arose with the development of productive forces. With the origin of private property, there began the process of the transformation of product into commodity and that led to the concentration of property in the hands of few and the overwhelming majority of the common and working people were dispossessed and reduced to poverty and low social status. The tribal chiefs and priests acquired a larger share of booty and they naturally grew at the cost of common people which created social inequalities. The Vaisyas were assigned the producing functions. Vena and his wife Suneetha were the leaders of the Nishada-Kirata revolts. Ajitha was an organiser of revolts against the established order in the sixth century B. C.

According to the *MBH*, the Sudras should not be allowed to make money and become rich. The *Sudras* wear only worn out garments thrown away by the upper classes. They should not leave the service of their masters even if when they were not paid their wages. Everything possessed by the Sudras in reality belonged to their masters. The status of sudra labourer was very low and they did not enjoy the freedom of movement. It has been observed that the first three castes must not travel in the company of the Sudras (*SBE*-VII. 199). Manu says that a sudra must not acquire wealth because thereby he causes pain to the brahmanas (*SBE*-XXV. 430). Kautilya's land development policy was intended to benefit sudras and cultivators and thus provide relief to the lower social strata-the artisans and the peasantry who formed the backbone of the rural population. Among the recipients there may be peasants who have the necessary means to carry on cultivation but no land to cultivate (*AS*-II. 1). The taxes weighed heavily on the people and their life was miserable.

The Sudras were free peasants in Mauryan times but that is not the case with the law givers who give small hope of happiness to the wretched Sudras who had few rights and little value was set on his life in law. *Karukusilavakarma* (duties of the Sudras) is distinguished from the *Vartta* (*AS*-I. 38), though *Karusilpiganah* (II-6. 2) appear as one of the items of state income. The slaves and labourers in the state service had to render service to the State because they are unable to pay fines imposed on them. For *Dasas* and *Karmakaras*, there is a right to be free on payment of a ransom amount which is earned by the work done for the master. Similar is the position of the *Ahitakas* (a person pledged with the creditor) when contracting a debt. *Visti* was a form of coercion, the additional and coerced labour from freemen which amounted to gratituous performance of public or royal services.

Kautilya wants labour to be impressed in state workshops, in a staff of sweepers, weighers, measures, slaves (*AS*-X. 4), in tillage of royal domains (*AS*-II. 24) etc. The people of Kasi had to serve king's fiat and he forced his subjects to beat the deer forest to the neglect of the cultivation of their farms (*Jataka*-I. 149 ff). The needy

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kings set the whole countryfolk to work for them without giving any glance to their empty barns at home `(*Ibid*-I. 339). It was a potential source of oppression (*Ibid*-II. 240). The tyranny of the imperial officers drove provinces after provinces into revolt. Undue exactions must have had a conspicuous share. A relentless picture of extortion is drawn as a part of great moral disorder (*Ibid*-I 339). The kingdom of Kampilya was deserted for oppressive taxation. Men betook to forests with their families, others remained indoors at night but on day-break fled to forests (*Ibid*-V. 98 ff).

The general condition of slave labour was better than daily wage earner who formed the lowest stratum in the rural heirarchy. A *Karmakar* says—"my master, festival days are for the rich. I do not even have the rice porridge for tomorrow. What have I got to do with the festival ? Please give me the oxen so that I may go and plough the fields". It is evident from the above commentary that a *Karmakara* could not afford to have a day off. The lack of interest in his work implies low wage and unsatisfactory working condition. Even a poor *Gahapati* supported himself and his mother by working as a hired labourer (*Ibid* III. 325). Most of the produce passed into the hands of the government, royal officials, feudal chiefs and creditors. The idea of fair remuneration is nowhere linked up with the cost of living. Freemen who did not own land and were also toolless had no independent means of livelihood.

J. P. Baikov (the Russian translator of the *Arthashastra*) insists that the economic relations between the lower class producers and the upper class enjoyers had a feudal character a position also accepted by few others but yet lack universal acceptance. That there was exploitation of labour of the lower classes is not to be denied. Such exploitation was a feature of this period and already in the Brahmana literature we have a reference not only to the *Sudras* but also to the *Vaisyas* as food for the higher *varnas* (*ABORI*-1950, p. 263). The *varna* system was based on unequal rights and privileges and Kautilya endores it. The vast mass of Sudras who sustained the economy of the state lay beyond the pale of the society and their condition was worse.

Kautilya's inclusion of Sudras among the aryans is not in conformity with the general standpoint of the Vedic texts. He attempted to assimilate the settled communities in aryan fold. The *Dharmashastra* texts are intolerant of everything that does not strictly conform to aryan beliefs and practices. In contrast with the immunities and privileges of the brahmanas in the *Dharmasutras* and *Arthashastra*, the Sudras and still more the outcastes were subjected to grievous disabilities. Most of them had no homes at all and they slept in the odd corners of the city. An ascending order of penalties is prescribed for offences by the lower castes against the higher ones and a descending scale is laid down for offences vice-versa (*Gautama* XII. I. 8. 13; *Vasistha*-XXI. 1-5; *Baudhayana*-X. 20-21; *AS*-III. 18-20). The *Devibhagwat* recommends that the brahmanas devoid of Vedic learning should be compelled to work as tillers of soil like the Sudras. The poor people who ran in debt in times of scarcity had no option but to offer himself for hire in richmen's estates. Poverty bred hatered, cruelty and violence. Outcastes remained an excluded category.

Even the laws came to be based on *varna* division. Deprived of religious and legal rites, the lower orders were relegated to the lowest position. Each *varna* was given a social and ritualistic recognition. Most of the converts to Jainism and Buddhism came from the common and economically oppressed classes because it freed them from the caste bondage. The lower orders were kept unarmed and their social position was almost at par with the outcastes. In the *Uttararamacharita* a sudra is punished for practising asceticism as that was not his right. Even the acceptance of food from the sudras is applicable only in emergency or as *Kaliv ajra* in the medieval period.

In feudal society peasants and artisans were condemned to a life of poverty. The aristocracy monopolised the material comforts and the masses could not aspire for luxuries. They could hardly earn two square meals a day and a piece of cloth to cover only partly their nakedness. The standard of living of the poor and destitutes can be gleaned through the *Harsacharita* of Bana. Bana says.

"A cloud of dust was raised by bands of running foragers with loins a mass of fodder bundles and grey with chaff, loose dirty blankets made of bits of old wool and dangling in tatters, torn jerkins presented by their masters."

"poor, unattended nobles, overwhelmed with toil and worry for conveying their provisions upon fainting oxen provided by wretched village householders and obtained with difficulty, themselves grasping their domestic appurtenances, were grumbling...the labour is ours but when pay time comes, some other rascals will appear..."

From Katyayana's rule, it appears that debt bondage became a means of recruiting dependent agricultural workers. The widespread poverty of the people inspired the richer classes to endow a large number of alms houses where free meals were given to the poor and the destitute (E.I-II.226).

The puranic literature and other sources suggest that economic factors and not just caste consideration determined the choice of persons for forced labour. The terms *daridapurusha* or *dina* indicated the groups of people irrespective of caste or *varna* that performed the *Sudrakarma* and had to render *visti* or forced labour. Brahmana Jadabharata was conscripted for forced labour by the king of Sauvira. Indolent and illiterate brahmanas had to do all types of labour service. Such brahmanas were no better than the despised lower order. Forced labour was an oppressive measure for which Jadabharata admonished the king of Sauvira. Kalhan pictures the state of wailing villagers, subjected to forced labour. An exemption from it was treated as an act of merit in Karnataka (*SII*-XI(I) No. I5). Even the Jains and Buddhists did not raise their voice against forced labour. The practice spread to all parts of India and rigour increased. The usurers also exacted labour service in lieu of interests. These coincide with the depression of money economy and growth of feudal tendencies. State hardly gave any protection and relief against the inequalities and frequent levying of corvee.

Economically shattered and bewildered these poor people had no social status either in public or in private. There were wide differences in the standard of living. While the nobles and the courtiers ate fried meat and drank wine, the common people had to be content with rice and wild vegetable of bitter taste. The poor had to face serious hardships from all corners. The *Trisashtisalakapurasacharita* (III. p. 248) relates the story of a woman afflicted with proverty. Hemachandra notices the truism that the poor women conceive quickly (*Ibid.* I. P. 53). Hemachandra was conscious of the phenomenon of poverty and of its underlying causes. Ksemendra makes references to the behaviour of the poor men and quotes Magha to the effect that hungry stomachs cannot live upon grammar nor can thirsty mouths drink the juice of poetry and that nobody ever rescued a family by learning. People, subject to abject poverty, had to resort to begging.

Sudraka's *Mrchakatika* gives a vivid picture of some of these aspects of poverty. A villager takes his bullock eart in the crowded market of Ujjain and fails to turn it on one side and is contemptuously accosted and condescendingly assisted by the craftsmen of Sakara. The statement of Sakara indicates that the poor often suffer unjustly at the hands of the rich in the court of law. Varahmihira's allusion to various instances of general poverty and misery among the common people show the fate of poor people and the exploitation of wage earning labourer is, therefore, not surprising.

Kalidas, born and bred up in poverty, looked with irony on these cringing court hangerson (that is, the brahmanas) so proud of their noble blood. There is an element of social critical thinking in his writing. Kalidasa's *Siva* is great because he concerns himself with everything human and stands as a great example of warm humanity. Siva was not invited by Daksa because he was poor. His defence of poor is discernible in fishermen's episode in the *Abhigyanasakuntalam.* He has shown courage in picturing the highest god in such a human way.

Sudraka is notable for its realistic depiction of city life and for its host of minor characters all of whom are drawn with skill and individuality. He also mentions domestic servants (*parijana*). Aryaka led peoples' revolt against Palaka. The sad fate of the untouchables is mentioned by Fahien. The glory of the Gupta court was to a great extent built on human misery. The power of the Guptas did not go unchallenged. It is only in the charter of Visnusena (A.D. 592) that it is sought to circumscribe the practice of *corvee* and restrictions were imposed on the collection of the presents for merchants.

A powerful revolt is said to have taken place as early as the second century A. D. in South India. It was a long drawn battle and it is described as a struggle of the *Kalabhras.* The *Velvikudi-grant* of the Pandyas (C. 9th. Century A. D.) denounced the *Kalabhras* as 'evils' who uprooted many *Adhiraja* and uprooted the established social order by confiscating all lands. A continuous struggle went on between the contending forces from third to sixth century A. D. As a result of the lavish gifts to the brahmanas, the latter emerged as an important class at the expense of the peasantry. The situation seems to have proved oppressive and eventually it caused a revolt led by the *Kalabhras* in the sixth century A. D. The are called evil rulers who established their hold on the Tamilnadu and put an end to the *Brahmadeva* rights. They patronised the Buddhist monasteries. The revolt could be put down only through the joint efforts of the Pandyas, Pallavas, Chalukyas of Badami. The revolt had wide repercussions and was directed against the existing socio-economic and political order of South India.

In South India agricultural labourers could not hold a position of responsibility in local administration. The condition of landless labourers was close to that of serfs and though many were employed on temple estates they were not permitted entry into the temples owing to their belonging to low castes. As the tax-free land had considerably increased and tended to expand over the period, small cultivators and other sections of ordinary people had to bear an increasingly punishing tax burden. The toiling people got together in times of trouble and opposed such exorbitant taxation as had no reference to the quality of land. They assembled in a great meeting and themselves fixed the dues of *Rajakaram* (*ARE*-361-62 of 1914 and 216 of 1917). They opposed all types of arbitrary and improper taxes. Movement for the reduction of taxes was conducted with militancy. Struggles took the form of refusing to sow until objectionable taxes were lowered (*SII*-VI. Nos. 50 and 58; *ARE*-620 of 1909). Landless labourers were denied any place in the *Ur* and the *Sabha* (*SII*-VI. 295).

The peasant mass rose in revolt against oppression, corruption and immorality of the brahmanas and the lords (*ARE*-92-of 1918). Kullotunga III (1178-1218) decreed that there should be no struggle against the brahmanas and those who violated this decree would be fined twenty thousand coins. The toiling masses also struggled for better emoluments (*ARE*-69 of 1924). There is a reference to the suppression of struggles against feudal oppression (*ARE*-80 of 1925). There is a reference to the immolation of four temple servants as a protest against the appropriation of their lands into temple property-(*ARE*-188 of 1925). It was a form of protest prevalent in that period. The rich brahmanas did not support the poor brahmanas. (*Temple Inscription* Vol. II.No. 783). The ordinary cultivators of the later Chola period seem to have conducted many struggles against the alienation of lands cultivated by them and also against the conversion of these lands into *brahmadeya* or *devadanam* because that would mean their removal from their lands.

The peasants rose in intense and purposeful fury. An entire village was burnt down, sites of pilgrimages destroyed and the heart of the temple was razed to the ground (*ARE*-91 of 1931). Such struggles assumed the shape of a great revolt. The state maintained armed forces to defend title deeds, inscriptions and temples from destruction. Temples were mostly the targets of attack. These spontaneous protests and limited action for specific demands had in their accumulation and depth a distinctive historical significance. Many temple inscriptions refer to protests and revolts and peasantry had to suffer a lot. The peasants were taught by religious teachers that they were working for Siva and were consoled by the promise of Kailash in the next birth. A protester was declared a *Sivadrohi.*

The Chola inscription show that there were a number of peasant revolts. In 1070 a Chola King, Adhirajendra, was killed by the peasants and there was another revolt in 1073 (*ARE*-464 of 1911). Peasant revolts against the brahmanas and the landlords were quite frequent in south India (*ARE* 80 of 1925). Shankarvarman of Kashmir (885-902) was killed by the peasants. Yasasakara led Kashmir peasantry against the feudal ruler Sarvavarmana II (939 A.D.) and he was ultimately overthrown. Bhima or Divya led *Kaivarta* peasant revolt in Bengal (1070-75). Uchchala led the Kashmir peasant revolt which overthrew Harsha (1101 A.D). There was a strong resentment and hatred among the peasants against the feudal lord (EI-X.No.10). A grant from the district of Gaya (Bihar) lays down that the grantees should be protected from the hands of the Sudras.

Overtaxation was a terrible plight for the peasants (*JASB*-47-135 ff). Petty hired labourers like plough drivers were landless labourers and Chandeswara calls them *Kinasa*. He has also described it as *Krsibala*. Their economic status declined with the growth of land-lords and in times of distress the peasants had to sell their ploughs, ploughshares, yokes and all other requisites of cultivation. The peasants of India had to pay a lot of dues, taxes and exorbitant rates of interest.

In the seventh century A.D. Ravisena noticed at many places in his *Padmapurana* (11.350) the harrowing poverty and wretched life of the mass of toiling peasantry *Krisivalajanah*. He has also pointedly referred to the antithesis between the poverty of the peasants and the field labourers and also the luxury of the landed aristocracy (31-700 ff). He has attributed poverty to the evil deeds of the previous world or birth. The terms *halika* and *halavahaka* were exclusively used for the plough-drivers who represented the lowest stream of dependent peasantry. They were greatly oppressed (I.174). *Karasaka* was the tiller of the soil. *Krsibala* in medieval period indicated impoverished peasantry including agricultural labourers. Such peasants sometimes escaped and became mendicants and some took to mass desertion. A Chola record says "It has become difficult for us to sustain ourselves on account of the arbitrary imposts exacted by several persons" (*Cholas* II (1), p. 343). Bhoja in his *Yuktikalpataru* (P.6) advises the the king to protect *Kriabala* as they were engaged in agriculture which was the source of all wealth.

Stray local peasant insurrections might have taken place. In the *Brhnnaradiyapurana* (3.2.38-61) a leader or the chief of the *Kinasas* is said to have killed people and plundered their property as well as of the temples. Ksemendra has made a sweeping remark that in his age of the *Yugaksaya*, the poor with malice towards the property of the rich were turning violent. Poverty was specially associated with the peasants. The *Skandapurana* suggests that in the Kali age masters will be greatly troubled by the organisation of the *bhrtyas*, a term used here for dependent peasants, share-croppers and field laboures. According to Sandhyakar Nandi, the king had to mobilise the resourcers of his vassals to put down the *Kaivarta* revolt.*Damara* revolts were in the nature of peasant revolts. They were armed peasants who took delights in the upheavels of kings. They were a source of trouble both for the king and the *Samantas* The Kasumir kings did not allow peasants anything in excess of bare needs. Peasant movements became reconciled to feudal set-up and leaders acquired a status akin to *Samanta* chief and tended to degenerate into ordinary feudal lords.

We learn from Jalhana that humble dwellings and harrowing poverty were often regarded as characteristic of village life. The *Avadanakalpalata* presents a peasant as the veritable embodiment of poverty and misery. Vacaspati Misra says that the peasant with his feet covered with dust was the best example of mentally undeveloped. The economic backwardness affected his social status. The standard of living in the countryside was very low. Similar was the miserable lot of the poor brahmanas and ksatriyas. For his sustenance a brahmana has to humour a farmer by praising him so that he may give him a handful of chaff. With a tattered umbrella in his hand and tormented by hunger a brahman acolyte returns home with tired legs after wandering for the whole day for his meagre alms. The *Prabandhachintamani* has various stories about poor brahmanas. The *SRK* (Nos. 1306, 1307, 1310, 1311, 1312, 1314, 1315, 1317, 1318, 1320, 1328 and others) refers to the poverty of the villages and villagers. A poor mother wishes that the night might never pass and thus stop the worries about food which she will face tomorrow.

The literary sources cannot be said to be devoid of a substratum of truth behind all these wailings. Dhendapa says that his house stood on a solitary hillock and there was no rice. A poem of Vara describes how a poor housewife with her emaciated body and torn clothes feel perplexed at the clamour of her children for food and she prays that one *Mana* measure of rice may be suffiicient for them for one hundred days. In another we get the following description—"Within the house is the kitchen, there the mortar, there too the crockery, there the children, there his own study. He has put up with all that, but what can we say of the condition of the wretched householder when his wife, who today or tomorrow, will present him with a new addition to his family, must spend there her time of labour"—Yet another instance,—even when I saw my children suffering from hunger, their body emaciated like dead body, or when I saw the old and worn out water jar leaking, I did not feel so much sorrow as when I saw my wife smiling pitiably and making a request to the female neighbour for the loan of a needle to mend her torn cloth and the latter turned angry.

The wages of an unskilled labourer varied approximately between half and one *Pana* a day (copper *Pana*). In the fifth century A. D. a day labourer was paid from half to one copper *Pana* a day. The purchasing power of a copper *Pana* was high and one-fourth of a copper *Pana* was sufficient to furnish a meal to a day labourer. Living in ancient India was by and large cheap and the monthly cost of feeding one individual sumptuously was about rupees two only (*NHIP*-VI. 360). Prices in general were very low and it continued to be low upto time of Ibn Batuta. According to an inscription connected with the *Kakanada Vota-Srimahavihara* Amarakardava, the son of Udana, gave twentyfive *Dinaras* in order to provide daily meals for ten monks and oil for two perpetual lamps (*CII*-III. pp 31-32). Pran Nath suggests, on the basis of Tanjore Inscriptions, the prices being seven times higher than those in the early Hindu period. Inscription No. I of Rajakesarivarman (A. D.1000) record the grant of two hundred *Kalanjus* of gold and it was from the interest of this amount that twelve brahmanas were fed for an unlimited time and were to be provided with specified menu (SII-III.No. I). We get an idea of the cost of living from Kolhapur Plates of Gandaradityadeva (1126 A.D-EI-XXXII.30-32). Standard of comfort among the labouring classes was very low. The poor landless classes, according to Manu, were born only to work for the upper classes and could not be made free even with the sanction of their own master. The various exactions and impositions on ordinary village folk made their life miserable.

The poverty of the poor people and village folk had become a favourite theme among the poets. The *Mystic Tales* of Lama Taranath, *Advanasatake* of Ksemendra, *Suktimuktavali* of Jalhana and various other anthologies contain a vivid account of the life and condition of the ordinary people in ancient India. Jalhana gives an idea of the suffering of the village folk on account of the exactions and obnoxious rules and regulation. Ksemendra in his *Avadanakalpalata* says that the *Karsaka* (peasant or landless labourers) with half clad bodies besmeared with dust and with naked and cracked feet laboured hard with their ploughs and spades—a sight hard to bear for a sensitive man. Peasants were hit hard by the oppressive behaviour of the officers and their associates. The picture of the poor is graphically drawn in the following lines of *Chaturbhaṇi*.

"these poor men moving behind one another, like rows of insects on the path, leading to the loss of life, go on uttering 'there is heaven', and desire to attain heaven"

What is true they donot even like to see.

Contemporary literatures depict the deplorable lot of the people with piercing pathos. Ksemendra has given a pinching sketch of the poverty of the people. The poor, taking to service, slept on bare ground, bore the pangs of hunger, suffered from inclemencies of wind and weather and led an infernal life. They wore out by degrees. They could hardly keep their body and soul together with whatever little they earned and looked in vain for the bounty of their masters. Many people became homeless recluses with a view to escaping from grinding poverty.

Owing to severe economic hardships, girls had sometimes no option but to become slaves. We learn from the *Lekhapaddhati* that female slaves were subjected to such tortures that they committed suicide. Sometimes they were beaten and their life became miserable. Laksmidhara, quoting a verse from the *Naradasmriti*, conceives of the subjects depending on the ruler for their means of livelihood. A verse in the *SRK* indicates that owing to the oppression of *Bhogapati* people left the villages. The peasant proprietors were reduced to straitened circumstances. Ksemendra refers to peasants working under the stress of hunger and thirst. A peasant labour was the living embodiment of misery and poverty. The *Mainamati* songs also refer to the terrible plight of the peasants on account of overtaxation. As a result of exhorbitant taxation, peasants sold ploughs, yokes and even children.

We learn from the *PPm* that cold wind and winter rains sent a shudder through the frail limbs of the poor. Biting cold conspired with severe starvation to intensify their suffering. With empty bellies and sad heart they coiled their hands and feet and lapsed in to silence. In his *Uttarapurana* Puspadanta thought of a *utopia* by way of contrast with indigence and destitution of his age. The following exclamation of a poor man in Hemachandra's *Bhavabhavana* (1123-A.D) is an eye opener

"I have no money, people are making merry, why should I give my wife ? I have nothing to offer to the officials. Today there is nothing in my house. The earthen pot is empty. What will happen tomorrow ? The family members are ill and we have no medicine. The king is perverse. It is not possible to live any longer in this country. Which god should I adore......my god is against me. The rich wants their debts back. Where should I go ?"

The *SRK* and *SKT* depict the life of village agri-cultural labourers known as *Pamaras* in a realistic manner. He comes to the field tardily, his chest covered with two arms and his lips shaking on account of cold. This shows that these people could not afford to cover the upper part of their body even in severe cold.

We have characterisation of poor in the following lines from the *SRK*.

(i) Penniless travellers shivering in the winter wind.

"With scorched rags to serve against the bitter wind,
he sets out falteringly on his way"

"......his half a cloak is old and cold and full of holes. He moans, huddling from one corner to the next."

"... The traveller put to shame by the silence of the matron's angry face, Shoulders the *bundle of straw that forms his only wealth* and slowly goes his way."

(ii) the poor householder and his suffering wife.

"...you must keep us and the children alive until the summer months are over, The rains will come then, making gourds and pumkins grow a plenty, and we shall fare like kings."

"Today we barely got the children food, how will we ever do tomorrow ? The poorman's wife keeps worrying and with cheeks darkened by her falling tears takes no joy in the evening's rest from work."

"you gave me feet to tire of travel, a wife to leave me, a voice for begging, and a body for decrepitude. If you never are ashamed, oh God, do you not at last grow weary of your gifts."

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